SUZUKI RM 370: START OF AN ERA

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MOTOCROSS ACTION MAGAZINE

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ATLANTA
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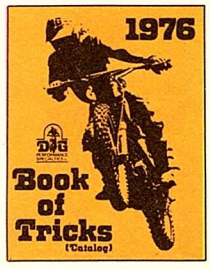

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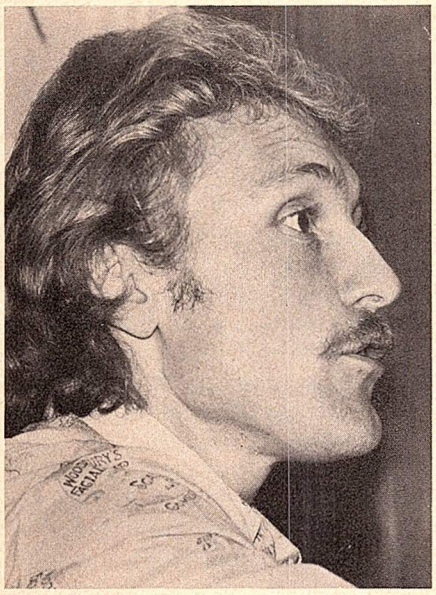

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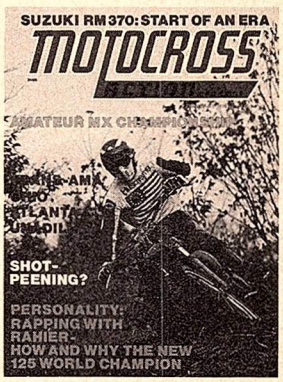
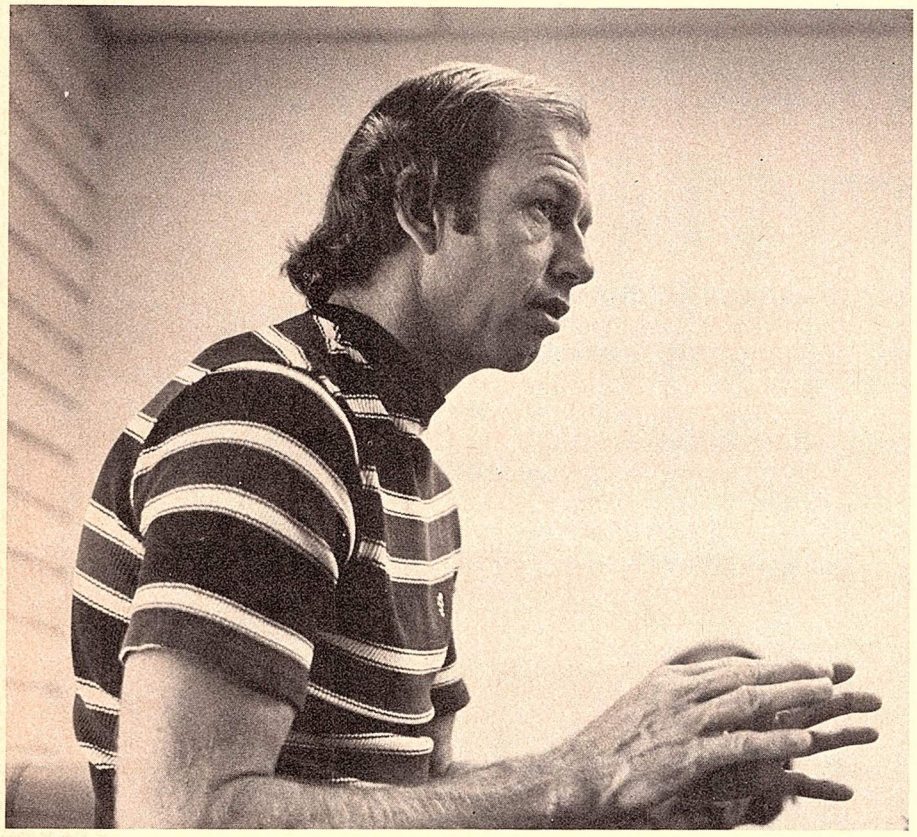

SUZUKI RM370: START OF AN ERA
MOTOCROSS
SHOT-PEENING?
PERSONALITY: RAPPING WITH RAHIER
HOW AND WHY THE NEW 125 WORLD CHAMPION

"Bicentennial Brad" Lackey, of the Husqvarna Lackeys, pushes Swedish steel into the breast of the motherland at the Unadilla Trans-AMA. For the gory particulars, read on.

ON THE MAINJET

By DICK MILLER



There still isn't a perfect motorcycle and maybe there never will be, but the offerings that are available to you at your dealer this year are like no other period in motocross history.

We, as do all moto monthlies, receive about a couple hundred letters a month where the letter writer asks us to make a choice for him between two brands of bikes he has narrowed down to his liking. This is hard enough for us to do concerning a bike *we're* interested in, let alone do it for someone we don't know anything about. There is a hell of a lot to consider in choosing a motorcycle for someone, and if it were as simple as saying that the new Sumbitchi is the only bike for you to consider because there is nothing to compare to it, you wouldn't need to write letters to ask our assistance.

The greatest thing about our sport is the diversity of offerings in racing motorcycles and the way they react to who is riding them. I'll guarantee you that 99 percent of the people who are reading this column would hate Roger DeCoster's motorcycle the way it is set up for him. The same goes for Adolf Weil, Heikki Mikkola or almost any of the super-fast guys in motocross racing. You have to be on their level of competence to be in tune for their bikes and be able to make the bike perform as they do. For you to throw your leg over the same saddle and think that you can go as fast because you've seen your contemporary hero do it on the same bike is sure to be a big disappointment to you.

It doesn't work that way, and just because the factory rider has trick equipment on his bike, it isn't the determining factor in his winning or losing. How many times have you seen a rider switch brands to a machine that someone else was winning on, only to have him fade into anonymity because he wasn't compatible with it? This fact alone proves that all riders/racers are not compatible to every brand of bike even though their competence level is above average. Which brand he should choose is a problem for the most competent of racers, let alone the beginning novice.

Motocross is not much different from other strenuous sports when you consider the human factor involved. Each of us has our own style. Some of us rely on purely physical strength to overcome the sport. Others tend to develop skills to make up for the lack of bodily stature or stamina, and then some are fortunate enough to have a piece of both worlds and an excess of talent thrown in. In the end it doesn't matter how you go about achieving your degree of excellence, because it *is* attainable and attaining it is only determined by your own motivation. Finding the right motorcycle is a different problem!

We have just gone through a year of testing motocross motorcycles of which we can honestly say there wasn't a bad one in the batch. I can think of no other time in my experience of racing and riding bikes when there was a situation like this. Obviously we didn't test all the motocross bikes on the market — and even the bikes we did test were not perfect — but what I'm saying is, they are all potential winners. This hasn't been true in the past. There have been some bikes I've ridden and raced which I wouldn't hesitate to warn people about, but these are now few and far between and didn't appear in the pages of MXA during the year. Some manufacturers won't furnish us their bikes or some of their models and maybe this is part of the reason we haven't run into any horror cases, but it *has* been an exceptionally good year for motocross equipment — and we're jazzed.

More and more technology from the factory racing bikes is reaching the consumer earlier as a production unit, and this is making the choice of which bike to buy very difficult. An even bigger problem is how to keep

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Publisher's Lab
JOHN SPISHAK, Supervisor

ADVERTISING AND EDITORIAL OFFICES
Hi-Torque Publications, Inc.
16200 Ventura Blvd.
Encino, California 91436
(213) 981-2317

THE PATTIS GROUP
CHICAGO:
4761 Touhy Ave.
Lincolnwood, IL 60646
(312) 679-1100

NEW YORK:
274 Madison Ave.
New York, NY 10016
(212) 679-7766
CANADA:
3286 Cavendish Blvd.
Montreal, PQ H4B 2L9
(514) 482-1454

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your old scoot updated fast enough to stay competitive. It seems every time you turn around something trick and new is hitting the market and causing you anguish because your buddy and fiercest competitor has just added it to his bike. How to keep current right now is really a problem and a constant drain on the pocketbook.

A year or so ago, we were in an era of having motocross machines that were putting out enough power in every class that was more than adequate for all but the above-average experts. With the new suspension components available to everyone now, there is a change taking place, and racers are going faster than they've ever gone before — allowing them to utilize this power that has heretofore been out of reach. Now it's coming down to reliability again, coupled with everything else, and who knows where it will stop and what perfection these racing machines will achieve. Next year shifting gears may be obsolete, who knows? One thing is for sure, the rider is the same! He still has the same weaknesses and frailties as before, and must adjust to this equipment the same as anyone else.

I'm in a position to choose a bike I like because I have an assortment available to me for testing, as do all the riders for our magazine. Each of us has our particular likes and dislikes because of our styles, and most surely would pick a bike — if he had the choice — that the others wouldn't. For us to tell you what you should buy would be very presumptuous on our part, since none of us can agree on what is the best. We can only tell you our experiences with a bike and relate to you what it does while we, as a group, ride and test it. If another magazine tells you that X brand is best, I could probably put one of my staff on their loser and beat their choice for the best bike — but what does it prove?

The way it stands right now in motocrossing the rider is the most important ingredient for going fast and winning. The machines themselves are becoming very close, and compatibility of bike and rider is the key word. If it works for you, then buy it and race it. Don't buy it because your buddy has one and he goes fast on it; after all, you want to beat him!

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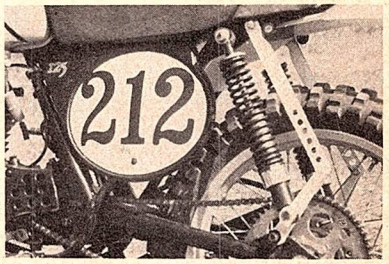

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BAZ'S BOX

by Paul Boudreau

Driving down the country two-laners of central Ohio, dodging the toll roads on the day's journey from the Semics' farm to the Buchanan Trans-AMA in Michigan, piloting a mini-truck that rides like an old Austin-Healey and that I've been living out of for four weeks, listening to gospel music on WUSO All-American Radio in Red, White and Blue, looking forward to at least two more weeks before I can get back to my nice, warm waterbed and my nice warm honey, isn't exactly my idea of a real, swell time. Maybe that's why I drive the back roads through the million little towns, looking for adventure or trouble, depending on how you look at it.

The road between Bucyrus and Upper Sandusky reminds me of the time Godly and Devil decided to follow the Ohio pro motocross circuit just to see if they could do it. I decided to tag along because I thought the experience would be real neat. Three weeks later we weren't so sure about how neat things were being.

It wasn't so much that we weren't making it; we were winning just enough each race to make it to the next race. What was *really* getting us down was the fact that we hadn't had anyone's company except each other's for the past 25 days. Being healthy, red-blooded American motocrossers, we were naturally inclined to seek companionship.

"Boy, I sure would like to get laid tonight," sighed Godly. We were camped in the pits the night before the next race just outside Mishiwaka, Ohio.

"Yeah," bubbled Devil into his Dr. Pepper. "Maybe we ought to go into town tonight and try to pick up some girls."

"I'm for that!" said Godly, jumping off the toolbox he was sitting on and digging around in his pocket for the keys to his van. He stopped and eyed me. "You want to come with us?"

I was never considered part of the tight thing that existed between Godly and the Devil. The only reason they let me come along in the first place was so they could have two vans; mine to hoid all the bikes and tools 'n' stuff, and theirs to keep sano to sleep in.

I weighed the question. Motocrossers are, by nature, partying types who like to get handled once in a while, but it always seemed to me that going into town looking for girls when you were camped out at the track was kind of a dumb thing to do. If you found one, what would you do with her?

"Sure, I'll go." What the heck. I went for it.

I ended up sitting in the Pink Shoelace on Rt. 31 near the Indiana border, slurping a Seven 'n' Seven and trying to convince this dingy blonde named Shirley that I was in love with her.

"Look, Shirley. It's getting late and my friends want to get back. Why don't you come along with us back to where we're staying?" I was giving it the second to the last try.

"Where are you staying?" She was playing it coy, but interested.

"Ah, we're staying at the KOA at the track. We can hang around the van and drink beer. C'mon." I tried to sound as harmless as I could.

"Well, I don't know . . . ." She was playing innocent.

"Ah, c'*mahn*," I said in my cutest New England accent, holding the "a" just long enough for her to raise

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an eyebrow.

"OK." She grabbed her purse. So much for phase three.

By the time we got back to the track, it was midnight. Shirley and I sat on the engine cover peering between Godly and Devil as Godly's van slithered through the muddy pits.

"What kind of campground is this?" Shirley wasn't buying the KOA bit.

"Oh, it's a family campground," I said. "We're camped over there at number 17."

"I don't see any number." She squinted into the darkness. Godly flicked his lights on low beam.

We parked and piled out of the van. I took Godly aside and asked him if I could use his van that night.

"No way, Charlie." Godly was being a stinker. "I don't want you messin' up my van and getting it all foul. If you're going to do *that* kind of stuff, do it in your *own* van."

"But my van has all the bike junk in it, Godly."

"Tough shit." Godly was a creep.

I got Shirley her beer. "Let's go sit in my van." I hit her with phase four.

"I don't know if I should." She was being shy.

"Aw, c'mon." I insisted.

"Well . . ." She came along.

We sat for a while in the rear door of my van, drinking our beers, looking up at the stars and listening to some jerk tune his Penton in the middle of the night.

"Wanna mess around?" I moved into phase twelve right away, because the night wasn't getting any longer and if I wanted to get any sleep at all before the race I would have to act fast.

"Well, I don't know if I should. We just met."

"Aw, c'mon."

"I don't know . . ."

"C'mon."

"Well . . . Yech! What's all this stuff?" She had leaned up against the rear knobby of the Devil's CZ.

"Those are just our bikes. You have beautiful blue eyes." I was sticking to the plan of operation.

"Ow! I think my hair is caught on something." Shirley's hair was tangled up in the rear sprocket of Godly's Husky.

"Here, I'll get it for you." I worked at it for a while, got it all out and smoothed it. "Your hair shines in the starlight and smells like strawberries." Actually, it smelled like chainlube.

She jumped. "Ack! I just touched something *awful!*" I had replaced the steering head bearings on Fang the Sang that day and left the greasy old ones in a coffee can into which Shirley had just stuck her hand. I wiped it off with a shop rag.

"When I hold your hand I hear music," I whispered, moving closer. Godly and the Devil were listening to WUSO.

"Everything is so greasy and dirty in here." She was playing hard to get.

"Yes, but you are like a rose in an oil field." I was giving it everything I had. I didn't even say anything when she laid her coat over the parts cleaning pail.

The evening finally ended when, while looking under the front seat with a flashlight for some matches to light a candle, I dipped the entire side of my head into a tub of old transmission oil Godly was saving for his chains. Right up to the middle of my nose. She didn't even kiss me goodnight.

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DIRT

By Holbert Holquist

OK class, get your pencils ready. How many of you know the difference between Jofa and Jofama? Ha, I thought so! Gather round and listen up while Holbert lays the truth on you.

Once upon a time in a place called Sweden there was a company named "Jofa" which made some of the neatest goatskin MX pants and plastic protective gear around. Only thing was, the plastic stuff was really designed for ice hockey. That was okay with motocrossers, because the stuff did the job pretty well, and was about all that was around. Then Jofa sold out its name and ice hockey interests to Volvo, the company that makes cars (getting complicated). That done, they started up a new company specializing in leather fashions for men and women, and in motocross equipment. They called the new company "Jofama." So what? Well, the new company designs its protective equipment specifically for motocross, not hockey, and the result has been increased protection for Jofama's sponsored riders, guys like Brad Lackey and Bengt Aberg. And for you too if you use Jofama equipment. Meanwhile, Jofa has continued to sell its ice hockey equipment under the Jofa name in the motocross market, and that's why so many people are confusing the names. Including you. Until now.

* * *

There was a lot of discontent with the AMA at the Trans-AMA. At Lexington, Ohio, Ron Pomeroy was bounced off the starting line of the first International moto because his pipe was not affixed with the proper approval sticker. Ron had gotten his bike sound-tested the day before, and a stickie was on his pipe. He blew his engine in practice, and the replacement engine used a different pipe.

Tommy Croft was waiting on the starting line of the second moto with a new pipe, because he broke one in the first moto. The new pipe didn't have a stickie, so he was ordered off the line.

Both riders left in a daze, had to get their pipes changed, missed the starts and joined the races a lap or more down.

This is the first series in which a sound test has been used. Like in any new system, there are going to be screw-ups. Those riders showed up without stickers on their pipes because they were not familiar with the system, not because they were trying to break rules.

When a rider is on the starting line, he has a race in his head. To keep a rider from that race or to frustrate him by causing him to miss the start is putting severe stress on him. He may join the race with a dangerous mental attitude.

In Holbert's opinion, Mike DiPrete, the guy who makes the decisions for AMA motocross and who ordered Pomeroy and Croft off the line, made the wrong decision. He should have made note of the riders without stickers and confronted them *after* the race was over. If it turns out a rule was broken, then the rider would not get credit for his finish, or he'd be penalized a lap or something. Only when a rider or bike is in a condition unsafe to race should he be pulled from the line.

A good example of a cool decision and fair action was when Jim Pomeroy lost a chain and received mechanical assistance at a place other than the designated area, a clear infraction that everyone is aware of. AMA ref Chuck McCall saw the infraction, but instead of black-flagging Pomeroy he notified Pomeroy's mechanic that he would have to disqualify Pomeroy. Pomeroy's own team then made the decision to retire Bimbo from the race. That's how it should be done.

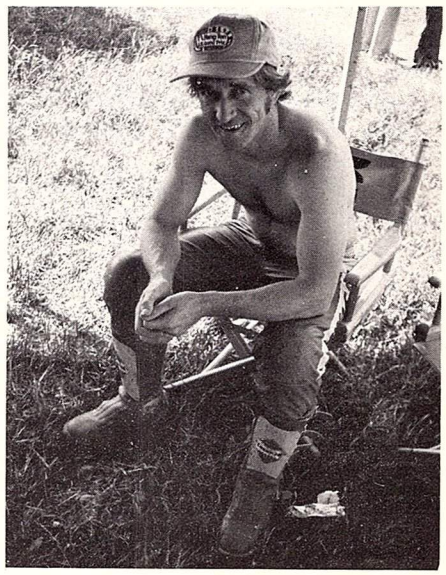
* * *

Trans-AMA is when all the California boys find out their windshield wipers don't work.

* * *

Canadian Champion Jan-Eric Sallqvist (Kaw) narrowly won eastern Canada's Molson's Motocross Series for 1975, finishing two points ahead of Japanese rider Noboyasu (Nicky) Kinoshita (Yam) in the Expert Class in the six-race event. Allan Jaggard of Burlington, Ontario, won the Senior Class aboard a 125 Honda, and Gerry Orme of North Bay, Ontario, took the Junior Class win for Bultaco. Holbert's Canadian connection tells him that Molson makes beer, and that it's pretty fine stuff.

* * *



Wave good-bye to Christer Hammargren. The Swedish veteran who won last year's 500cc mudbath in Italy is hanging up his Jofa. Chris, 31, won his first big title in 1964 when he was Swedish Junior National Champion. He's been racing in grands prix since 1965. Originally a Husky rider, Hammargren has ridden for Yamaha and Kawasaki for the last few seasons, finishing sixth in the world in 1973.

* * *

Steve Stackable, who probably lost the National Championship because of mechanical woes last year, is being wooed by several companies to ride their machines, and the rumor is that Steve is taking the offers seriously. Stay tuned, Holbert will find out!

* * *

Latest word on the panic front is that Yamaha is withdrawing entirely from European racing. This means that people like Hakan Andersson, Ake Jonsson and Jaak van Velthoven are looking for rides. Not only that, but Giacomo Agostini, the all-everything road racing wizard, is out of work, too.

As to Yamaha's racing effort in the U.S., "We'll maintain our current posture," as my source at Yamaha International put it. That means that Jim Weinert will be back for sure. No decision has been made on

whether Tim Hart and Bruce McDougal will have rides. On the Grand National side of things, both Kenny Roberts and Gene Romero will still be wearing the yellow and black.

And why all the changes across the water? Yamaha tells Holbert that it's because they've decided that local racing sells more motorcycles than pro racing. Could be.

* * *

The Mid-Ohio motocross track at Lexington is not a very good motocross track. It's flat, rolling and fast, and not very difficult. The riders don't like it. Tracks in an international series like the Trans-AMA are supposed to be challenging. The Mid-Ohio track is a joke, yet the AMA — which is supposed to take care of this stuff — sanctioned two prime international events (the Trans-AMA and the 125 GP) there in 1975. Of course AMA headquarters are only a half-hour down the road.

* * *

It's funny. In 1974 Jimmy Ellis was in a good position to be riding the Trans-AMA Support Class. He was young, fast and needed the experience. And he would've been good competition for Smith and Howerton. But he had to ride a developmental 355 Can-Am in the International Class. Last year, he had the victories and experience to ride in the International Class, yet Can-Am had only a 250 for him.

* * *

The hot word from mysterious Belgium is that six-time World 250 Champion Joel Robert has resigned from Suzuki and will be campaigning his own private Puch. Which ain't so private, since Joel is the Puch distributor for Belgium. Joel has been bitching about his bikes for the last year or so, and Holbert's guess is that Harry Everts' success on a Puch this year got the former Champ's attention. 'Course, it doesn't hurt that if Robert's popularity helps sell Puchs in Belgium, it's money in his pocket.

* * *

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Miss MOTOCROSS
JAWA

KISSING WINNERS is really fun. That's why the nicest thing that's happened to me this whole year was when I was chosen to be Miss Motocross. I mean, I don't know a thing about motorcycles, or why anybody would want to get all muddy for a silly looking plastic trophy, but it's just really nice to go out on Sundays and give the winner his victory kiss. And so far I've kissed winners on Yamaha, Honda, a Suzuki winner—no, two Suzuki winners, a Husky winner (well, they all seem husky to me—ha, ha), but I never kissed a Kawasaki winner. Until last week.

His name was Ronnie. I think it's the first time he's ever raced here. And he was a very nice person. He felt so good about winning, he kissed a little *stronger* than the others. But it was a *nice* strong. And he even apologized for getting me a little muddy.

Anyway, after the award ceremony, Ronnie introduced me to his motorcycle, a KX250. And he talked all about its lay-down gas shocks, alloy piston-port engine, electro-something-or-other, five speed transmission, long travel suspension—I didn't understand a word he said, except full knobbies, but he was so...well, enthusiastic, I just nodded and smiled a lot, and I smiled a lot when he was driving me home in his van.

I hope Ronnie wins again next time. But even if he doesn't, it'll be okay, 'cause I can still make him feel good.

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lets the good times roll.

KX125, 250, 400 are manufactured for off the highway use only in sanctioned competition events upon a closed course.

WRENCH WRACING

By ARDIMOS MIERSTEDT

LEG CRAMPS

Dear Ardimos:

Now don't laugh, but is it unusual to get a very painful cramp in the upper leg while racing? The only way I can get rid of the cramp (while racing) is to stand on the pegs with only one foot and stretch the other one out till the pain stops. But sometimes, like when going through the first turn, this leads to more pain. Can you help me out?

Jeff Roach
La Crescenta, California

Of course. The cramp in your leg is caused by insufficient amounts of blood being supplied to your leg muscles. More training on the ten-speed will shape your leg and reduce the chances of a cramp. The pain you feel when you stick your leg out in the first turn is a common affliction called Runyerfootoverus Breakyerleggus, *or Grossi's Syndrome. You can easily avoid this problem by keeping your feet to yourself in the first turn. Stay high.*

I AM CURIOUS, PURPLE

Dear MXA:

I own a Yamaha Enduro 100, purple, and I would like to know some changes I could make on the bike to make it a motocrosser.

Jay Bergholt
College Park, Georgia

The first thing you can do is paint it yellow.

NOTICE: I have several letters from a fine fellow named Michail E. Pawlak of Echo, Louisiana. In his writings, he seems to indicate the throttle is sticking on his ATC-90 Honda and he is at a loss as to what to do. Mr. Pawlak, take apart your carburetor and clean out all the Louisiana swamp crud that's grabbing your throttle slide.

SYNTHETIC vs. PETROLEUM

Ardimos:

Which oil is the best pre-mix lubricant, synthetic or petroleum? What is bean oil? What is the best pre-mix ratio?

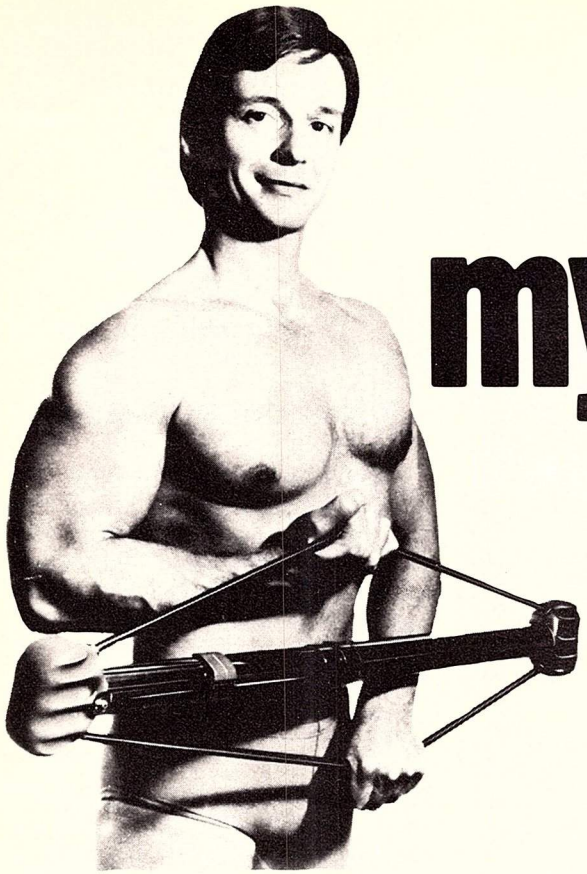
Glen Evans
Winchester, Kentucky

At this stage of the game it's six of one and half a dozen of the other. Organic petroleum oils make your engine feel good because both the oil and the steel come from the earth. They're brothers. You can depend on petroleum oil because it is, for the most part, a consistent product. To specialize petroleum oils for two-stroke racing applications, oil companies put in additives like an anti-seizing compound and detergents. The problem with petroleum oils is that they tend to break down under high temperatures and heavy loads and the chemical changes in their additives may cause contamination. Also, petroleum oils will leave a residue when burnt.

Synthetic oils are a relatively new discovery. These types of oils are specially made in laboratories by chemists, engineers and computers. The molecules of synthesized oil are built step by step for a specific application. The synthetic oil you buy for your race bike is probably specially formulated for air-cooled, high-performance two-stroke racing engines. So you can be fairly sure the oil you use is going to do the job. The problem with synthetic oils is that they are only as good as the companies that make them. Because there must be a best brand, there must also be a worst one. The worst one could harm your engine.

Bean oil, or racing castor as it is sometimes called, is the oil extract of the castor bean plant which happens to grow wild in my back yard. If you don't chop them down when they're tiny, they grow into trees. At any rate, some people grow the little boogers commercially, harvest the beans and squeeze the oil out of them to sell to us racers. When burned in a two-stroke engine, castor oil produces that exotic aroma that the old folks consider pure racing. It also produces a gum residue in your ring grooves and on your piston skirts. Normally, a racing engine using castor oil is torn down periodically to clean this gum away. If the gum is left to build up, the rings will stick in their grooves and not be able to form an effective seal. The good part about it is that castor bean oil tends to flow toward *heat while petroleum oil flows away. This property of bean oil helps to maintain a lubricating film on the hot cylinder walls during high-speed operation. Most professional motocrossers used to depend on castor bean oil exclusively before the large petroleum and synthetic oil manufacturers started producing oils that were as good as the bean oil and offering big contingency money for pros who use their stuff.*

The *mixing ratio always used to be 20:1. Then* Blendzall *advertised their racing castor to be mixed at 32:1. After that Pennzoil advertised their petroleum two-stroke oil to be mixed at 32:1. Bel-Ray and other synthetic oils were to be mixed at 40 and 50:1. The reasoning behind the higher mixing ratios was that less oil in the intake volume meant more gas to cool the engine and increase the fuel charge. The synthetic oils were so constructed as to allow for these lean mixtures and still keep up a good lubricating film. Lately, however, the 40-plus mixing ratios have come under fire from those who believe that the old 20:1 ratio set up a thicker film of oil between the piston and the cylinder wall, acting as a cushion to keep the piston from banging too hard against the cylinder wall when it changed direction at the top and the bottom of its stroke. Suzuki engineers, with a newly designed lightweight piston in their latest RM bikes, are strongly adhering to the old 20:1 as their recommended mixing ratio no matter what kind of oil you use. Presumably, the policy is to increase piston life. Since Suzuki lost a World Championship because of engine failures, it would seem they have learned well a lesson in dependability.*



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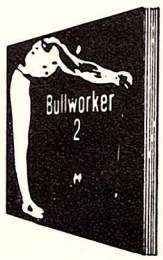

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MAIL ENTRIES

"WHAT MEAN'UM WFO?"

WHA?

Gechnt Henn:

Teh habe 20 jahn wohmen in Lodz. Sehn sien intenessienem henn schaftlich finm. Benuf technill knaftwagen. Intenessient sie neklame henm finm: amklebezetteh und pnospedts. In haiz danke scho'm und vensenden begnusem.

Jan Pietizak
Maja, Poland

(*OOse-ay ethay eep-cray. —ed.*) (*Earch-shay ee-may. —ass. ed.*)

SON OF DIRT SQUIRT

Dear MXA:

When is Hodaka gonna come up with the "Mud Dud"? Also, I haven't seen any donuts for Preston Petty's new grips.

Jim Hanna
Sacramento, California

(*Haven't seen any fritters for his fenders, either. —ed.*)

HE AIN'T HEAVY

Dear whoever I'm speaking to:

I was hoping you would print a little picture of my brother. He's really good. I'm not lying. He's got 52 trophies and all together he's got $400 in cash he's won and his number is 24. He's in the Open Expert class and rides a Pursang Bultaco. He's 17 and he's also talking about turning professional. His name is Jimmy O'Day. He's six feet, has black hair and green eyes. If you would, please, please, please with sugar on top, put this picture of Jimmy in your magazine.

In that picture his number is 25. That's because this picture was taken before he was changed to 24.

Anna O'Day
Edgewater, Maryland

MORE BALL

I have the pleasure of wanting to know from you why your excessively fine publication sees fit not to cover the great European social sport of Motoball? Please to answer my communication at your convenient opportunity.

Wolfgang Pffeningmeister
Hamburg, West Germany

WHAT BIKE?

Where is your story on Carlsbad? The squids at *Dirt Bike* had the story two issues ago. Everyone else has done it already. Besides, I haven't got my picture in any of the other ones, and I want to see if it's in yours.

Frank Ruff
El Cajon, California

(*It isn't. —ed.*)

SMART ASS

I am inquiring about an ABH shirt like the kind Chris Hammargren and Ake Jonsson always wear in the pits. Please return my info and don't give some smart ass answer like you usually do!!!

Jay Cummings
Whitewater, Wisconsin

(*What, me smart ass? —ass. ed.*) (*That's what he said. —ed.*)

I LOVE MOTOCROSS

Dear MXA:

There are two reasons why I am subscribing to your magazine: One, it is all motocross. I love motocross almost as much as girls. You cover it well and completely. Two, your people take perfect photos. I love photography also. Wow, the best of two worlds! I like "Baz's Box" and "Mainjet." I like all of you.

Steve Chaffee
Salem, Oregon

(*You've got good taste. —ed.*) (*Oh, that's just my mom writing again. —ass. ed.*)

WHAT MEAN'UM FU-MANCHU

Dear Sirs:

I would like to know how the Indian gets into your magazine every issue. Do you slip him in when you send the production editor out to McDonald's? Also, who is that shady looking guy with the Fu-Manchu moustache in the Honda-Suzuki comparison test? he sure is a mean looking character.

The Endo Kid

(*The Indian* is *the production editor. —ed.*) (*The guy with the Fu-Manchu is Jeff Little of Suzuki of Santa Barbara and I'd follow him into the jaws of death. —ass. ed.*)

GOOD MAGAZINE

Dear MXA:

I like your magazine because you have a lot of pictures. Most magazines have nothing but hop-up kits and ambralisements. I'm going to race so I know what good magazines are.

Rickey Gummers
Broken Arrow, Oklahoma

(*What mean-um ambralisements? —ed.*) (*OK, Mom, enough is enough. —ass. ed.*)

DESERT MADNESS

Hi Dick, I just rode your club's annual Check Chase desert race and it was really a blast, as always. I ended up breaking my bike and DNFed and that's the reason I'm writing this note. A neat guy by the name of Ray Johnson, Blythe, California, who reads our MXA picked me up out in the boonies with his four-wheel-drive truck. Desert people are neat too!

Pete Maly
MXA Test Rider

(*Was there any doubt? —ed.*) (*Aaarrrgggg, is nothing sacred? Now you've got Pete doing it. —ass. ed.*)

THE TWIST

Dear MOTOCROSS ACTION:

I have a poem I conjured up just for you . . .

Moto-Gone

Some people
loudly laughing
Splintered
My thoughts
to far left out
Football game frenzy.
I was searching
Scratching the itch
wanting it differently
than before.

I have gone far
left my fears away
waiting to open
waiting to jump into
another
twist of the wrist
Love you all up,
Becky

P.S. I'm waiting . . . More male bodies, like Rich.

(I'm all yours, Becky. —ed.) (No, take me! —ass. ed.)

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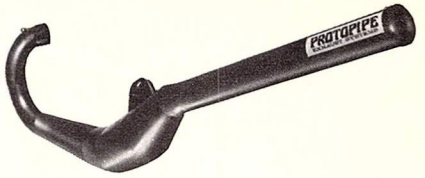

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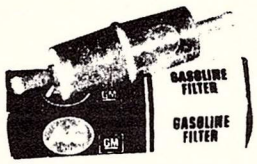

"Came out #1 in filter shootout"

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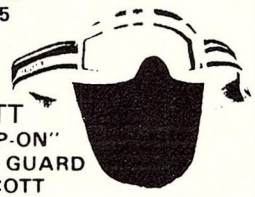

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Extend fork seal life, protect front fork legs.

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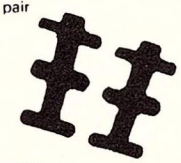

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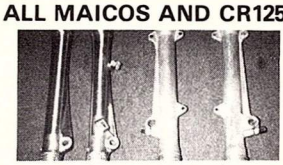

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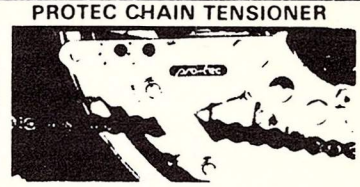

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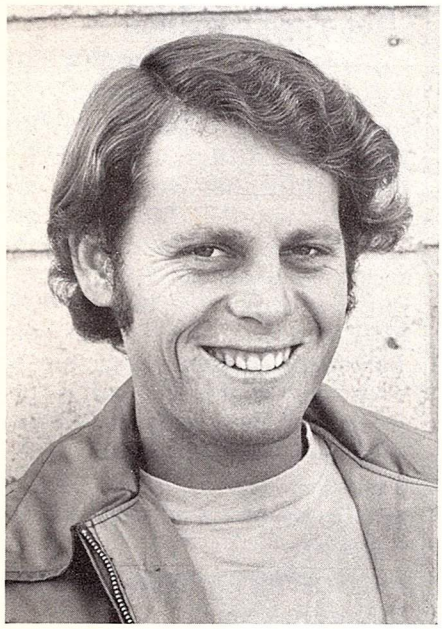
☐CT-6	MT250	'73-'74
☐CT-7	XL250-350	'74-'75
☐CT-8	HUS 250-400-450	'70-'74
☐CT-9	SUZ RM125	'75
	YAM 100-125-250-360 400-500 MX&YZ	'72-'75
☐CT-10	SUZ TM250-400	'74-'75
☐CT-11	YAM DT250-400	'68-'75
☐CT-12	HUS 250-360	'75
☐CT-13	BUL 250-360	'75
☐CT-14	SUZ RM250-370	'75
☐CT-15	KAW KX250-400	all
☐CT-16	YAMYZ80	all
☐CT-17	YAM TT500	all

WHIPS

Little things about people who make motocross neat

AL BAKER



We don't really need to tell you who Al Baker is if you're a regular reader of MXA, but for the uninformed we decided to make him a Whip because of his recent overall win in the Baja 1000. His partner in the grueling race, Gene Cannady, is also being honored this month.

Al has been racing for 13 of his 24 years and has won about everything there is to win in off-road and desert racing. He's competed in a couple of Six Day trials, winning Silver medals. Prior to testing bikes for MXA he was a test consultant for Kawasaki Corporation. He also held down the duties of Motocross Team Manager until he got the itch himself and started competing. One of his better finishes was a third in the 250 National Championships in Kentucky.

Al owned and operated a motorcycle accessory store until he started his own R&D shop, and now he devotes his full time to developing racing components. Most of his work is with Hondas and Suzukis. His sponsor for the Baja race was Long Beach Honda. It came down to a dice with another ex-full-time motocrosser, Mitch Mayes, as these two neared the final leg of the long race, with Al getting the nod on the 400cc four-stroke Honda. Congrats Al, we're proud of you!

BUCK MURPHY

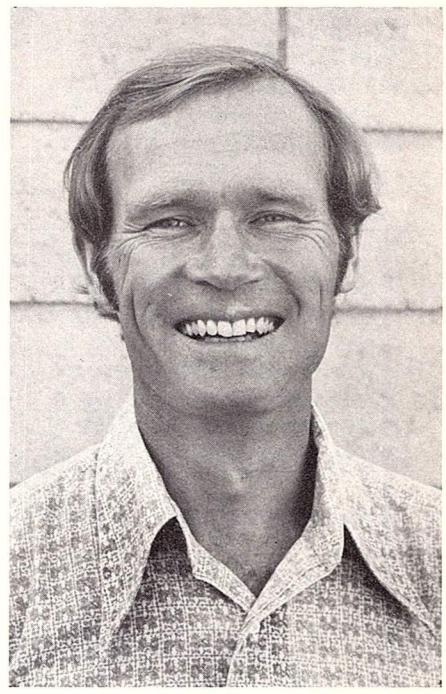
The word is that Buck Murphy is starting to get serious.

The 20-year-old Can-Am rider from Long Branch, Washington, a little town just down the road from the bright lights of Tooterville, first got national attention when he rode the last couple of races of the 1973 Trans-AMA Support Class. Buck did well enough at Puyallup aboard a four-stroke Honda to get a Penton ride, and he would have won the overall at Saddleback if the bike hadn't seized with only a few minutes left in the final moto. The following spring, Buck had a hot hand in the early going (he finished second overall at Daytona), only to fade as the season progressed. When Penton withdrew from motocross, he was left without a ride.

Can-Am picked Buck up in 1975, taking him to Canada to race for the Canadian championship. The fastest man on the track in the early season, he had trouble sustaining his pace because he was out of shape after his long layoff. Then, just as his physical act came together, bike problems started to crop up. Buck lost his confidence, and began to finish badly. A tangle with a tree during the third round of the Canadian championship series finished his season on a down note.

But the monastic regimen at the Can-Am hideaway in Valcourt, Quebec, seems to have done Buck good. He showed up at Unadilla for the Trans-AMA and finished sixth in class, and observers said that Buck looked a lot more serious and consistent than he ever has. So this may be his year. Can-Am won't say where Buck's racing yet, but whether it's the U.S. or Canada he'll probably be giving someone a run for the money.

GENE CANNADY



When motocross was really taking off here in the U.S. in the late '60s and early '70s, the 125 class was dominated by the Sachs motorcycle. With the likes of Gary Bailey, John Rice and others, Gene Cannady's name kept coming up in the winner's circle. He was for a time virtually unbeatable on the little machine; besides piling up MX wins, he teamed with Max Switzer to win the Baja 500 race with a second overall, defeating many a big bike in the process. Gene is also a Six Day rider and has earned one Silver and two Gold medals in Six Day competition. He's had factory rides with Honda and Kawasaki besides his former allegiance with Sachs/DKW.

Gene is 34 years old, married, and has an eight-year-old daughter. When you hear the phrase "your friendly neighborhood Narc," that's Gene. He's officially a Police Detective Sergeant, Narcotics Division, but his racing history dates back 15 years, long before he became a policeman.

When Gene and Al teamed up to win the Baja 1000 it was the first time since 1967 that the bikes have been able to beat the cars in this prestigious event. Congrats to you too, Gene!

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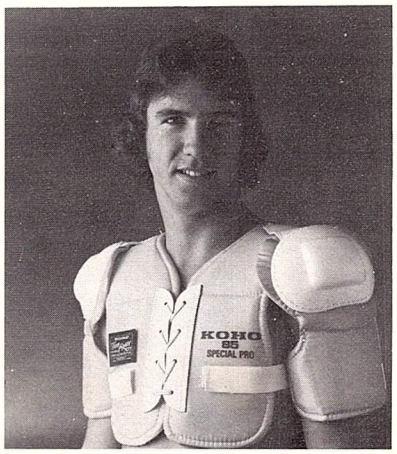
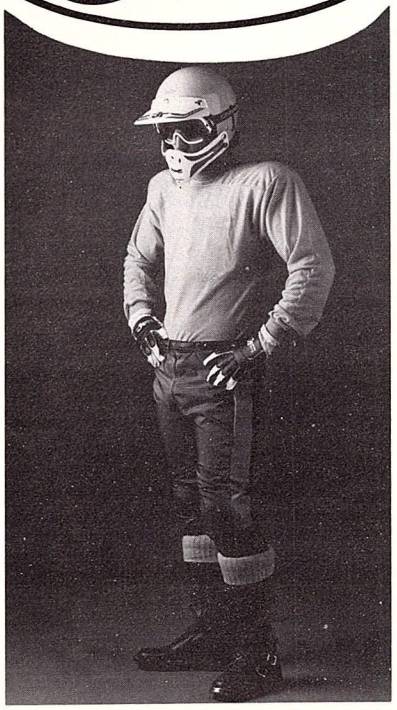
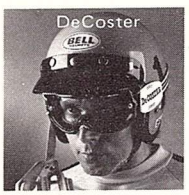
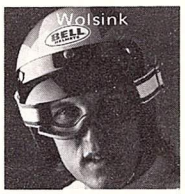


KOHO Shoulder Pads $39.95
Kids Jr. Pad (Not Shown)
10-15 yrs. $19.95
Kids Pee-Wee 6-10 yrs. $15.95



WFO Acrylic Jerseys – Sizes: S,M,L,XL
(Red, Blue, or Yellow) $12.95
KOHO* "Unleathers" – Sizes: 30, 32, 34, 36, 28, and 38
Mikkola – Red, White & Blue
Husqvarna – Blue & Yellow
Maico-Bultaco – Red, Black & Yellow
Yamaha-Suzuki – Yellow, Black & White
All Sizes and Colors $109.85
*Approved for A.M.A. Professional Motocross





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complete with tear-offs and extra lens $9.95
JOFA Mouthguard (red, white, blue, yellow)..... $6.95
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Kids Striped Jerseys Sizes: 24, 28, 32 (red-white-blue, orange/black, green/black, green/white, dark blue/light blue, blue/maroon, yellow/blue, red/yellow, green/yellow, blue, yellow, green and red 100% cotton. $15.95

CARRERA Goggles – Red, white, blue, black frames $12.95
KOHO "707" Finnfighter ..... $ 8.95
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Body-vented (white), yoke & sleeves (acrylic) yellow
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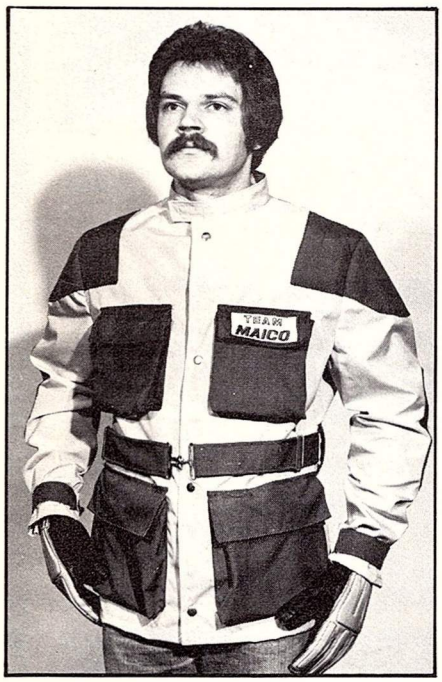
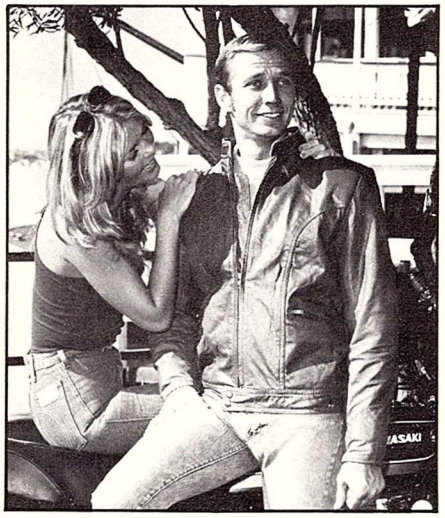


MAICO JACKET

Who is this man and what is he wearing? Who cares who he is. He's wearing a Maico Qualifier Jacket made of waterproof, machine washable 1000-day cloth, which is tough stuff. Just what you need for a 1000-day trials. Giant pockets for carrying Maico spare parts have Velcro closures. Check out your Maico shop or write Maico Accessory Division, Dept. MXA, 109 Electric Ave., Lewistown, Pennsylvania 17044.

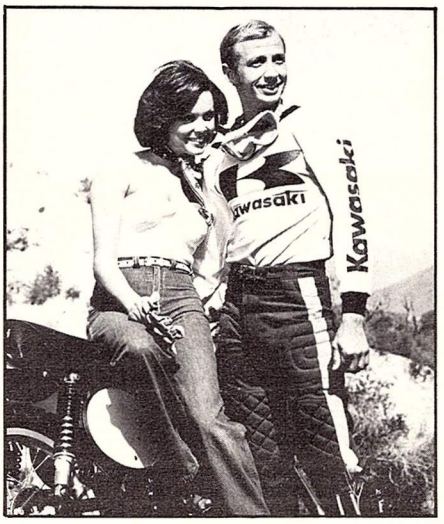
FENDERS AND AIR BOXES

Torsten Hallman says these polyethylene replacement parts are super-strong, lightweight and virtually indestructible. White and translucent fenders, air boxes and seat bases for practically all race bikes. Send a buck to Torsten Hallman Racing, Inc., Dept. MXA, 1409 Fayette St., El Cajon, California 92020. Phone (714) 449-6712. East Coasters can call THR in Illinois at (312) 543-5247.



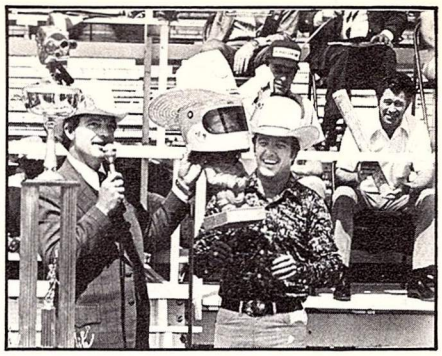
MACHO LEATHER

Every time Randy Milligan wears his Kawasaki leather jacket, he has to beat the girls back with a stick. You can get a jacket just like it, and a stick, at your local Kawasaki dealer. You have to supply your own girls.



GREEN GEAR

It's Randy again and look who he's got with him this time! It must be those foxy Kawasaki denims and racing jersey he's wearing. Looks like she's holding his gloves because his hands are busy.

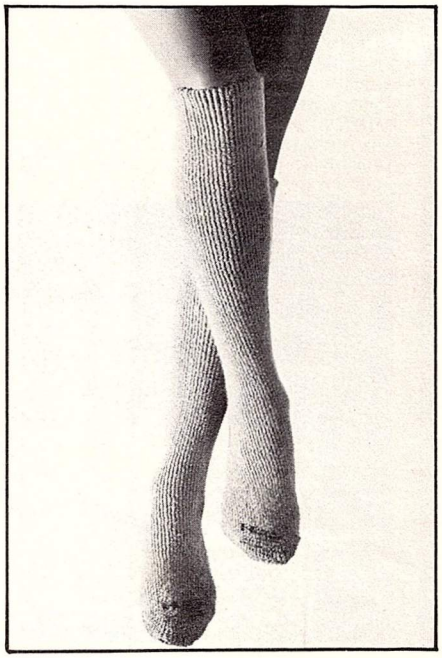


TEN-GALLON BELL

Indy 500 type Johnny Rutherford got this trick ten-gallon Bell Star from the Bell people. Holy Offenhauser, Batman!

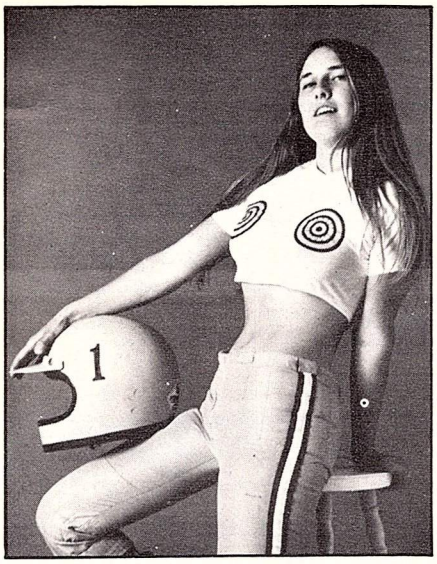
WOODS MAICO

The deluxe setup: a woods-legal 250 Maico with a wide-ratio five-speed. This is the real thing, a genuine 250 motocrosser with a quiet, spark-arrested up-pipe, skid bars, centerstand and the ignition wired for lights. What more could the woods rider ask for?



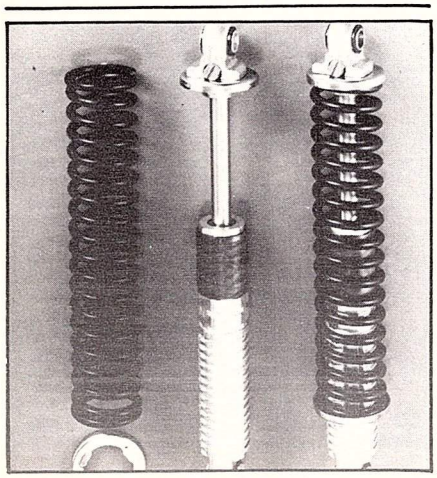
GREEN SOX

For your feet. Fuzzy. Get 'em at your Kawasaki dealer.



TARGET T-SHIRTS

Special deal for girls: Target Products T-shirts with two targets instead of one. We think, however, they were off target with their targets and put them too high. Unless, of course, your boobs grow directly out of your shoulders. District 37 hot slipper Sue Hall (the picture) wears hers chopped at the waist (nice waist) but you can get the whole T-shirt by sending $3.50 and your size to Target Products Inc., Dept. MXA, 2724 West Main, Alhambra, California 91801, Attn: Desk U-294. (U-294 — Isn't that the main ingredient for the A-bomb?)



ARNACOS

Arnaco is offering a newly designed shock absorber that takes all the abuse of forward mounting. Fully guaranteed for one year and they cost less than $70 per pair. Write Arnaco, Dept. MXA, 20729 Dearborn Ave., Chatsworth, California 91311, and ask for information packet #RP-294. And that'll cost you 50 cents.

RACING OIL

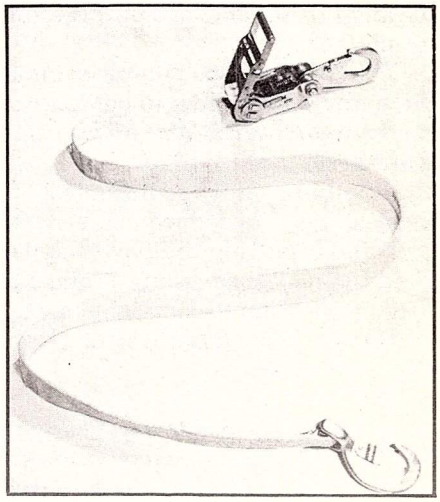
Back in the old days we used to use Kendall ashless aviation oil for pre-mix. Now they've got a trick oil especially for two-stroke engines because it, too, burns without ash. They don't say it's for racing engines but it'll work great in your trailbike or lawn mower. You'll see it in your shop and your shop can get it from Kendall Refining Division, Witco Chemical Corp., Dept. MXA, Bradford, Pennsylvania 16701.

CARRERA GOGGLES

Good old #98s are still the hot setup. You can write for a free Carrera sticker from Knobby Shop International, P.O. Box 1592, La Jolla, California 92038.

RED, WHITE AND BLUE STRIPE

Make your starting lines patriotic with this Bicentennial Striper. It lays down a six-inch-wide stripe of red, white and blue. For $99.95 you can't go wrong. One thousand feet of striped paint for $44. Get 'em by the dozen from Fox Valley Marking Systems, Inc., Dept. MXA, Bartlett, Illinois 60103.



H-D TIE-DOWNS

This has got to be the ultimate tie-down. The G.I. surplus straps are seven feet, six inches long, made from nylon webbing and heat treated steel rachet mechanisms. They're rated at 10,000 pounds and cost $24.95 *each*. Dick Cepek, Inc., Dept. MXA, 9201 California Ave., South Gate, California 90280. They've got a neat free catalog with a bunch of off-road stuff in it. Now all you need is a 10,000-pound motorcycle.

trans-ama

ROAD ATLANTA

Pomeroy Wins With Style

by Paul Boudreau

Photography by Charles Morey

I missed Road Atlanta altogether. It was just one of those things. I couldn't quite seem to make all the connections necessary to get my bod cross-country in time for the race. But that gave me plenty of time to get to Lexington, Ohio, for the second race of the series at Mid-Ohio Motocross Park.

Once there, the story of the Atlanta race was laid out for me. Pomeroy had won, and his riding was excellent. People in this country haven't seen Pomeroy race since Snake River and last year's Trans-AMA. If Pomeroy was good then, he's better now. His third Grand Prix season has improved him tremendously.

The factory 360 Bultaco under Pomeroy sounds slow in comparison to the more radical *blat* of the exotic Japanese open bikes and the Husqvarnas, but sound can be misleading. Good starts indicate the Pursang is putting the power down. And the new magnesium Marzocchi front forks seem to complement Jim's riding. The Pomeroy/Bultaco package works.

DeCoster had some bad luck and bent his brake pedal back early in the first moto, leaving him without a rear brake. Despite this severe handicap, he finished fourth. "My Suzuki has a very good front brake," commented the Champion. He came back in the second moto to devastate the competition, leaving no doubt in anyone's mind that he is the best in the world.

Although Brad Lackey holeshot both motos, suspension problems in the second heat kept him from combining a good score after his finish behind Pomeroy in the first moto. At the same time, Jim Weinert was fighting a virus and couldn't get his bod running on all cylinders.

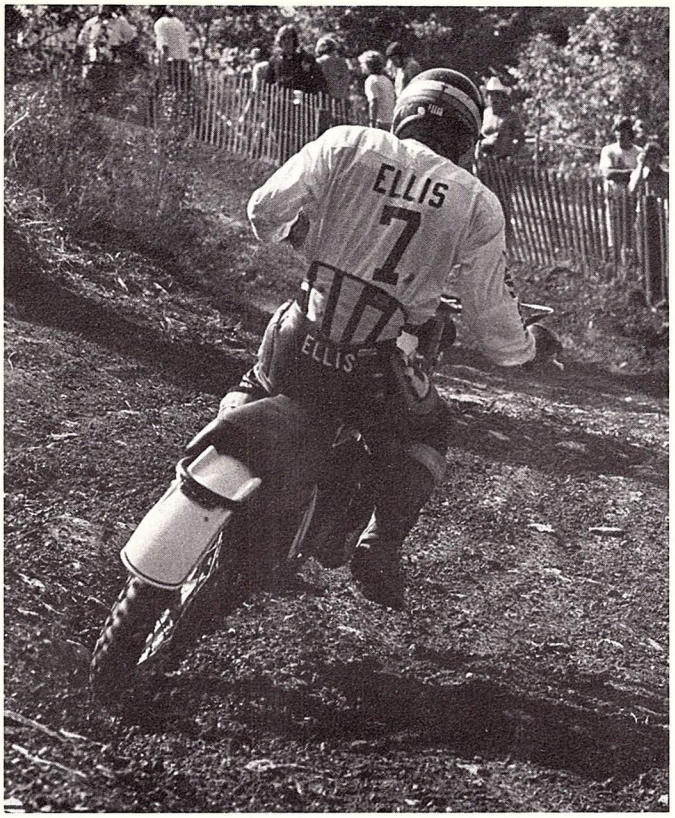
Two-time U.S.G.P. winner Gerrit Wolsink rode well and finished fourth overall. Dr. Wolsink, fresh from his successful third-place GP season, is very relaxed and quite content with being one of the five best riders in the world.

Banzai pilot of the day award went to Pierre Karsmakers. Bad starts set the stage for hair-raising rides through the pack. But Pierre's on-the-gas, off-the-pegs ride left his RC400 Honda with a fractured piston and the Dutchman with a DNF.

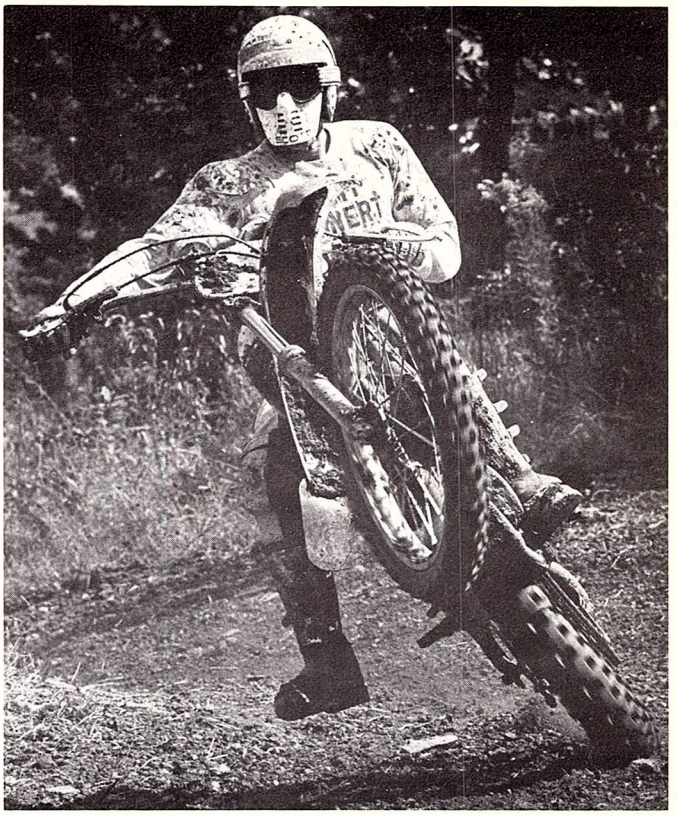
Former 250 National Champion Gary Jones, returning to competition after breaking his leg early in the season at Daytona, could not get his experimental Jones Islo to finish.

Most impressive was Honda's brilliant 125 National Champion Marty Smith. I thought that after his

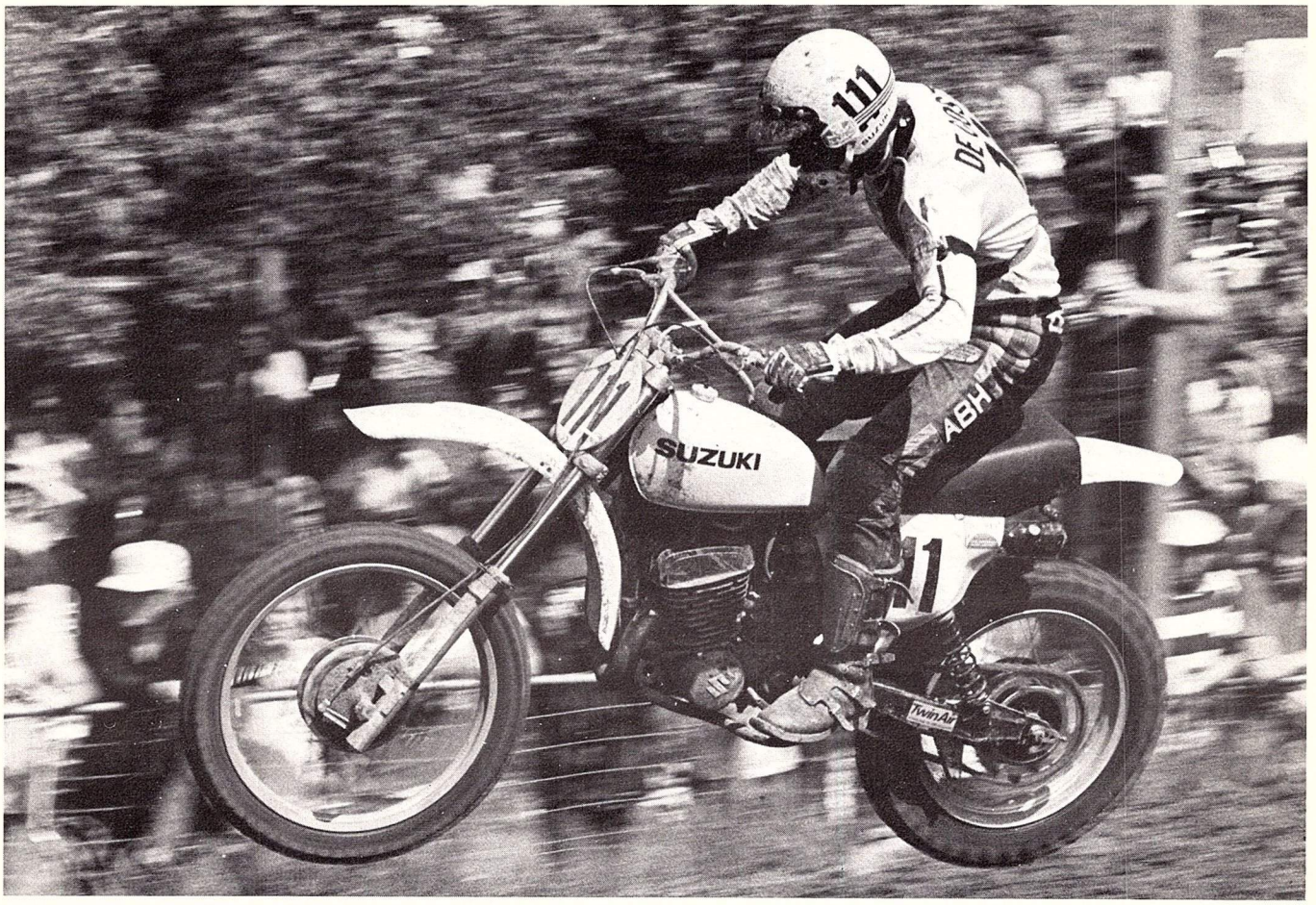
Continued



Jimmy Ellis swept the Support Class, after Can-Am failed to come up with an open bike for him.



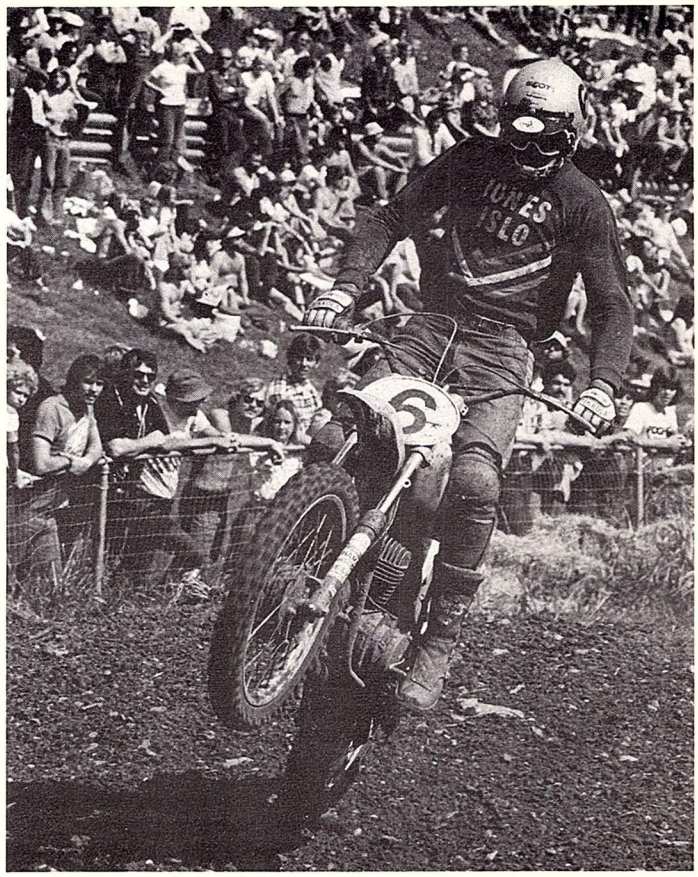
Jim Weinert looked better than he felt. The U.S. Open Champion had a bad cold which slowed him down.



A bent brake lever slowed DeCoster in the first moto, but the second was all his.

ROAD ATLANTA

Gilbert DeRoover, officially the second-best 125 rider in the world, was on hand to race a 380 CZ. A ninth was the best he could manage.



It was a frustrating day for three-time National Champion Gary Jones, as the prototype Jones Islo failed to finish.

Lackey led Pomeroy in the second moto before dropping to sixth.

Marty Smith turned in an impressive and consistent ride, finishing third and fourth for third overall. Teammate Karsmakers wasn't so lucky. A broken piston put him out of the running.

Showing his usual consistency, DiStefano rode to 8-5 finishes, sixth overall.

stunning string of victories in the 125 Nationals, he'd be a bit put off by running behind the more experienced international riders on an unfamiliar and sometimes unsettling 400cc Honda, but he handled the situation with a poise and finesse beyond his 18 years. Riding the hairy RC effortlessly, Marty scored very high in both motos and almost stung Pomeroy in the closing laps of the second moto. Many eyes will be on Smith for the remainder of the Trans-AMA.

250 SUPPORT

Normally, the 250 Support Class is a showcase and proving ground for the young, upcoming riders. This year, however, the performances of John Savitski, Steve Wise, Rick Burgett, Mickey Kessler, Jim Turner and Honda's amazing Sioux Indian Tommy Croft will be overshadowed by several veteran riders and manufacturers hoping for some of the hot exposure which Honda has scooped from the Support Class for the last two years. Can-Am, still without an open bike, has entered Jim Ellis and Mike Runyard. The perennial Tim Hart will represent Yamaha, and Rich Eierstedt, fully recovered from his wrist teardown, will be Croft's partner on the Honda team.

As expected, Ellis won both motos at Road Atlanta.

ATLANTA

RESULTS
500cc INTERNATIONAL

1)	Jim Pomeroy (1-3)	Bultaco
2)	Roger DeCoster (4-1)	Suzuki
3)	Marty Smith (3-4)	Honda
4)	Gerrit Wolsink (6-2)	Suzuki
5)	Brad Lackey (2-6)	Husqvarna
6)	Tony DiStefano (8-5)	Suzuki
7)	Kent Howerton (7-7)	Husqvarna
8)	Gaylon Mosier (5-12)	Maico
9)	Gilbert DeRoover (10-10)	CZ
10)	Jim Weinert (9-11)	Yamaha
11)	Nils Nilsson (13-18)	Husqvarna
12)	Gary Chaplin (12-9)	CZ
13)	Stewart Anderson (16-14)	Bultaco
14)	John Calathes (14-17)	Suzuki
15)	Ron Pomeroy (18-15)	Bultaco
16)	David Green (17-16)	Kawasaki
17)	Mike Gillman (19-18)	CZ
18)	Jim West (11-29)	Maico
19)	Bob Harris (29-13)	CZ
20)	Steve Stackable (15-29)	Maico

250 SUPPORT

1)	Jim Ellis (1-1)	Can-Am
2)	Rick Burgett (3-2)	Yamaha
3)	Mike Runyard (2-6)	Can-Am
4)	Terry Clark (8-5)	Husqvarna
5)	John Savitski (6-7)	Bultaco
6)	Tommy Croft (10-4)	Honda
7)	Don Kudalski (5-9)	Honda
8)	Jim Turner (11-8)	Yamaha
9)	Wayne Boyer (4-18)	CZ
10)	Rick O'Brien (13-10)	Honda

technical

SHOT-PEENING, ONE-UPSMANSHIP

It's hard to believe that beating your parts into submission does so much good for them, but they love it!

by Dick Miller

About a year ago we did an article on the advantages of magnetic inspection, which is commonly called magnafluxing. The article dealt with the process of inspecting metal parts, showing some of the advantages to be gained in using the process on racing motorcycles. Now, as a natural — if belated — follow-up to the magnafluxing article, we're going to tell you about shot-peening.

You've probably heard the term "shot-peening" being bandied about by a lot of tuners, racers, etc., but not many really know what it is or how it works. Hopefully, we'll be able to explain it to you in simple terms, and at the same time help you to realize the advantages of a technique that is seldom used in the motorcycle industry, yet very common in most other forms of competition and transportation. Our test bed for this story was a new CR125 Honda six-speed gearbox, from the bike I raced last fall in the Baja 1000. I wanted to try out shot-peening on the box because of the high stresses the small CR gears would be exposed to during the grueling Baja.

Shot-peening is a cold-working process used primarily to increase the fatigue life and prevent stress corrosion cracking of metal parts.

That is the standard definition of *what* shot-peening is. It can also be used to form parts or to correct their shapes, to work-harden surfaces, overcome porosity and in a number of other applications which would be relevant to very hard materials subjected to fatigue and impact loads — such as the gearbox of a motorcycle.

Jim Meyer & Associates is a metallurgical race car improvement service which specializes in making parts stronger than originally intended. We used the company's services for this article, and so can you. It's the cheapest insurance there is for expensive racing parts.

Shot-peening is used in a number of applications in the automobile industry, and for good reason. Shot-peened parts develop a strength far above that which would be indicated by the materials involved. Many automotive components such as leaf and valve springs are routinely shot-peened to increase their resistance to wear and cracking.

It was a General Motors research engineer named John Almen who first stumbled on the shot-peening process in 1933. GM had been having problems with valve springs which wore too quickly. Almen noticed, however, that the springs from one source of supply were lasting far longer than any of the others. Backtracking to the supplier, he found that that company had had a supply of corroded springs, and that rather than throwing them away they had cleaned the springs by tumbling them in a rotary machine along with some grit. The supplier had not realized that he was changing the strength characteristics of the metal at the same time.

Almen followed up on this accidental process, and in time developed a method of measuring, specifying and duplicating shot-peening intensities. The Almen Gauge is now a standard for the industry.

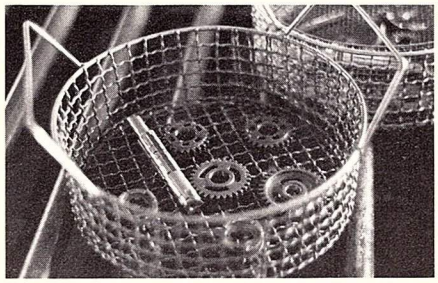
In shot-peening, the surface of the finished part is bombarded with round steel shot in special machines under totally controlled conditions. Every piece of shot acts as a tiny peening hammer. When the surface has been completely "peened" by the multiple impacts, the resultant residually stressed surface layer (which is in compression) prevents the formation of cracks. It is common knowledge that a crack won't propagate into a compressed layer.

Think about it. If you were to take a ballpeen hammer and hit a piece of metal, you would be compressing the metal at the point of impact. A repeat of this until the metal was thoroughly peened would give you a sheet of metal with the appearance of an orange peel. But appearances aside, what you would have done would be to have put stress into the metal through compression, and the end result would be that the stress produced at or near the surface would be at least as great as half the yield strength of the material. Peening machines can control the process precisely, taking into account the variables due to different metal strengths and the amount of strength required.

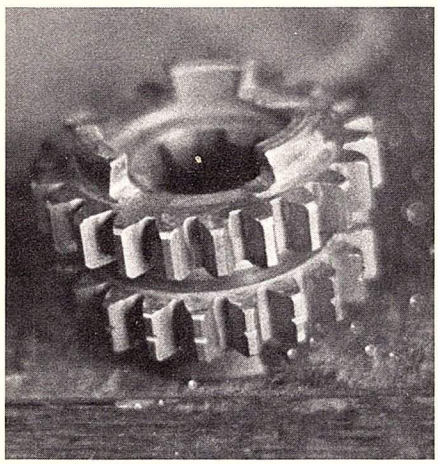
If shot-peening is so good, why don't all manufacturers use the process for stressed parts? Good question. All parts subjected to stress in aerospace are *required* by the federal government to be shot-peened. All automobile axles, leaf springs, valve springs and some other components *are* shot-peened. (GM researchers have found that shot-peening increases the life of some parts as much as 1500 percent!) Needless to say, it would be good to also shot-peen higher compressive stressed parts such as gears, crank shafts and rods, and this absolutely *should* be done in racing engines.

Factory teams don't usually bother. Because they have access to a large supply of spare parts, most factory racing teams would rather replace parts after each event. And

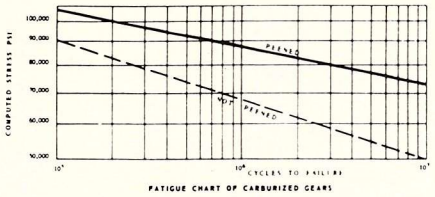
First step was to magnetic-inspect all the gears. The new CR125 gearbox showed no cracks, but this is how a crack would look if it had.



One of the gears was suspect, so we Zygloed the bunch for a double-check. Zyglo is an inspection process for metals that uses a dye which is more penetrating than water and when washed and dried shows defects under a special light.

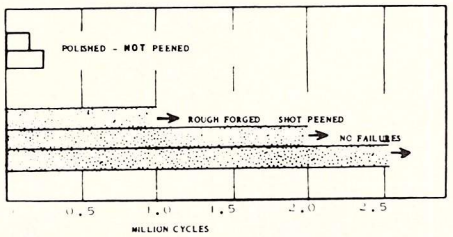


All the gear mating surfaces were undercut and matched by Cycle Products West, making it an impossibility for the gear to slip out when engaged. Shot-peening should be the final step and all work should be done to the parts involved prior to this process.



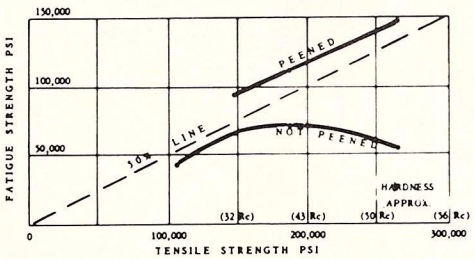
FATIGUE CHART OF CARBURIZED GEARS

Gears:
It was reported that one customer found the life of a case-hardened drive gear stressed to 80,000 psi was increased from 200,000 cycles of fatigue life before shot-peening to 30,000,000 cycles after shot-peening.



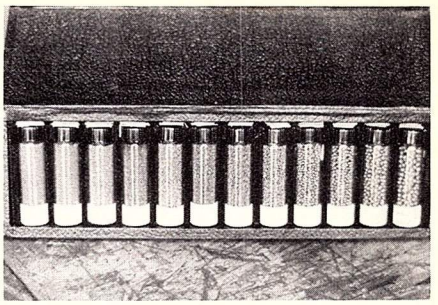
FATIGUE DURABILITY OF FORK TYPE CONNECTING RODS

Connecting Rods:
The most critical areas of connecting rods are the fillets next to both bores, but the rods are usually shot-peened all over except in the bores.

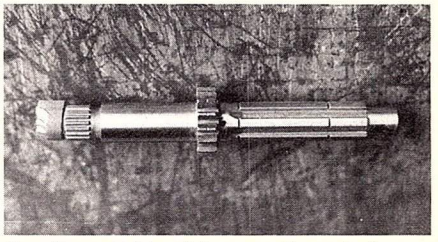


ROTATING BENDING FATIGUE LIMIT OF STEEL AT VARIOUS HARDNESS LEVELS

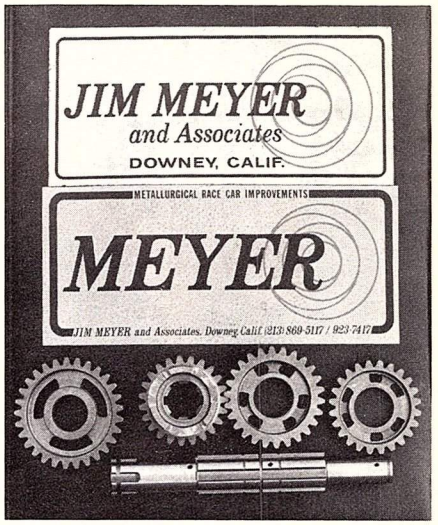
Shot-Peening Very Hard Steel:
In recent years increasing use has been made of steel at hardness levels above Rockwell C50, corresponding to tensile strength above 250,000 psi, for fatigue and shock applications. Without shot-peening the greatest fatigue strength was obtained at a hardness around Rockwell C40. At higher hardness the material lost fatigue strength. With shot-peening the fatigue strength increased continuously with greater hardness. At a hardness of Rockwell C52 the shot-peened fatigue strength was 144,000 psi, more than twice the best unpeened fatigue strength. My CR125 gears measured a Rockwell C57.



Shot-peening balls vary from microscopic to ball-bearing in size depending on the parts and use of the process.



Any bronzed bushings or threaded areas have to be masked so the peening doesn't ruin them. The minute dimples left on the surface area of the gear teeth help to retain an oil cushion for lubrication of the surface when the gears mesh.



Check out the charts and notice the differences of stress before and after peening. Preston Petty and I blew a CR125 gearbox while leading the Baja 500. My CR125 in this year's Baja 1000 used the gearbox that was done for this article, and it worked as slick as you could ask for. We estimated that about 20,000 shifts were made on it for the 800-plus miles, and when I tore it down there was virtually no noticeable wear. Convinced!

as long as the parts supply is adequate, money is no serious consideration and there are no inherent stress problems with particular parts, most larger companies will continue to replace parts as a safety factor, rather than striving for longevity. But this is hardly a practical solution for the private racer.

If you have a bike that continually blows gears or snaps rods because it wasn't designed to accommodate the stress to which you're subjecting it, then it makes more sense for you to improve the stress of those parts rather than simply buying new ones all the time. Especially since shot-peening is not really an expensive process.

It took about four minutes of machine time to shot-peen our CR125 gearbox, and an interesting

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Story and Photography by Jim Russell

NATIONAL AMATEUR MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Can-Am and the AMA get together to support a first for American Amateur Motocross

250 winner Mike McGowen of Spring Valley, California, combined two firsts and a third for his title.

HOW IT HAPPENED

The idea for the first National Amateur Motocross Championships came from AMA Amateur Activities Manager Jim Nidiffer. It had never been done before, but Jim felt there needed to be a way to determine, once and for all, "who the best AMA amateur motocross rider in the country is."

The AMA has an amateur point system which is, by and large, outdated and unrealistic. At best, it picks district champions; but since those champions are determined on the basis of accumulated points instead of head-to-head racing, the system favors riders who live in areas where many AMA events are scheduled. The result is an "AMA Champion," not necessarily an Amateur Champion. Nidiffer's idea was to bring everyone together and find out who was really Number One.

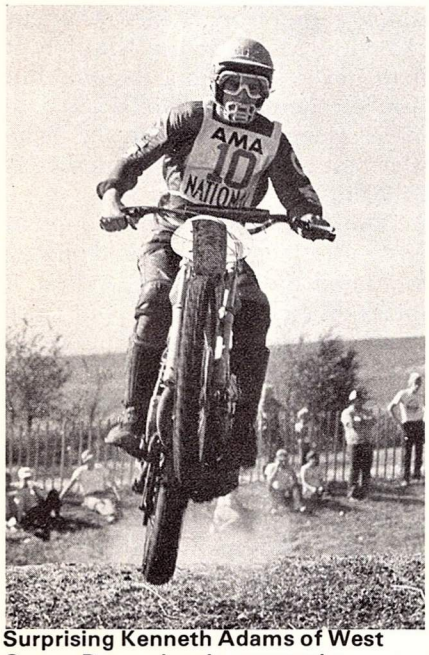
Jim checked out the problems involved (for example, travel demands on the amateurs), resolved most of them and began promoting his concept as the only proper way to truly select the best AMA amateur riders. He pushed the idea that the amateur championships would be good for AMA promoters too, because it would make every future AMA race a sort of qualifier toward a year-end national championship event. This would increase the incentive for amateurs to ride AMA events, meaning more AMA memberships and sanctioning fees, and larger entry lists for the promoters of AMA events.

The concept began to take shape. Baldwin (Kansas) Motocross Park was chosen as the site of the first event because of the championship caliber of the track, its central location close to the geographical center of the U.S., and the expertise of the track operators — the Wheelsport Motorcycle Club of Lawrence.

Then came the break that made the race. The AMA had no sooner set aside a budget and begun preliminary planning than along came Can-Am saying, "We'd like to do something for amateur motocross. How can we help?" It

was a marriage made in heaven.

A system of regional qualifiers was devised. Atlantic Regional Championships were held in New York, Virginia and Kentucky; Central Regional Championships in Minnesota, Indiana and Illinois; and Western Regional Championships in California and Washington. Competition started with approximately 47,000 contestants in the three different regions, and was whittled down to a final entry list of 135 competitors when race day dawned over Baldwin. The stage was set for the first significant national amateur motocross in AMA history.



Surprising Kenneth Adams of West Grove, Pennsylvania, swept the big-bore class aboard a very stock 380 CZ.

Ed Moore of Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey, finished well enough in the last moto to take the second spot overall in the 250.

Richard Van Hoozer shows the Kansas crowd a little Illinois technique.

Amateurs Jay Holst of Plainview, Minnesota (#14), and Keith Barghahn of Waterloo, Iowa (#17), have at it. Barghahn went on to finish eighth 250.

NATIONAL AMATEUR MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIPS

The track, location, weather and ambience were all perfect for the first National Amateur Motocross Championship in AMA history. One hundred and thirty-five riders from 27 states were on hand to race for glory, AMA gold medals and the three Can-Am motocross machines which would go to the class winners. It was an amateur weekend, a look at the grass roots of a sport that is becoming increasingly professionalized, and its mood was set by Warren Daoust, President of Bombardier, Ltd. (the maker of Can-Am motorcycles), when he said, "We believe in the amateurs. They support the sport, they buy the bikes. We are committed to the amateurs for both fun and profit."

One of the event's most dominant riders was Mark Barnett. The Honda rider from Bridgeview, Illinois, ran away from the 125s in a three-moto sweep.

Second overall in the 125, Tennessee's Gene McCay styles his Noguchi Yamaha over a jump.

John Tessitore of Bonita, California, hotfoots his monoshock toward a third overall finish.

125 CLASS

The profit motive obviously had 14-year-old Mark Barnett's full attention. The ninth-grader from Bridgeview, Illinois, simply blew apart the class on his B&E Honda, taking a first-lap lead in each moto and never letting go. Barnett won all three of his motos by wide margins, while runner-up (and former two-time National Minicycle

Cont'd. on page 59

Ah, the spoils of victory. Mark Barnett lays one on the trophy lady, proving that there's a lot to be said for puberty.

NATIONAL AMATEUR MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIPS

125 CLASS

1) Mark Barnett, Bridgeville, IL (1-1-1) ..... HON
2) Gene McCay, Lexington, TN (2-5-2) ..... Noguchi YAM
3) John Tessitore, Bonita, CA (5-4-3) ..... YAM
4) Brent Euen, South Elgin, IL (9-2-11) ..... HON
5) Kurt Janish, Plano, TX (13-8-5) ..... HON
6) Douglas Cowell, Ithaca, NY (10-9-8) ..... HON
7) Richard Van Hoozer, Ottawa, IL (11-7-10) .. KAW
8) Kevin Arnold, Louisville, KY (6-13-15) ..... YAM
9) Ed Davis, Tacoma, WA (3-6-28) ..... HON
10) Robert Shoup, Tipp City, OH (18-14-7) ..... HON

250 CLASS

1) Michael McGowen, Spring Valley, CA (1-1-3) SUZ
2) Edwin Moor, Woodcliff Lake, NJ (4-3-2) .... MAI
3) Jeffrey Heaston, Fort Wayne, IN (2-2-5) .... HON
4) Jeffrey Mathews, El Cajon, CA (9-4-4) ..... C-A
5) Todd Snyder, Vaughn, WA (6-9-9) ..... C-A
6) Blaine Elledge, Woodinville, WA (15-12-1) ... C-A
7) Chuck Bender, Appleton, WI (14-15-6) .... HUS
8) Keith Barghahn, Waterloo, IA (11-10-16) .... SUZ
9) David Morris, Poway, CA (19-8-11) ..... KAW
10) Troy Bradshaw, Middleburg, VA (18-14-7) .. BUL

OPEN CLASS

1) Kenneth Adams, West Grove, PA (1-1-1) ..... CZ
2) Jeffrey Prevost, Perry Hall, MD (2-2-2) ..... MAI
3) Chuck Pettigrew, Lucerne Valley, CA (4-6-4) MAI
4) Kenneth Frost, La Mesa, CA (16-3-3) ..... SUZ
5) Chip Howell, El Cajon, CA (3-12-8) ..... HUS
6) Vincent D'Ercole, Alexandria, VA (11-5-9) .. YAM
7) Delno Becker, Oroville, CA (12-7-10) ..... CZ
8) Dale Parlin, Athens, MI (10-15-15) ..... BUL
9) Jim Connolly, Redondo Beach, CA (17-10-14) ... BUL
10) Gary Slack, Canton, IL (22-14-6) ..... YAM

trans-ama

MID-OHIO

Weinert Wins His Second Trans-AMA, As DeCoster Blows Minds

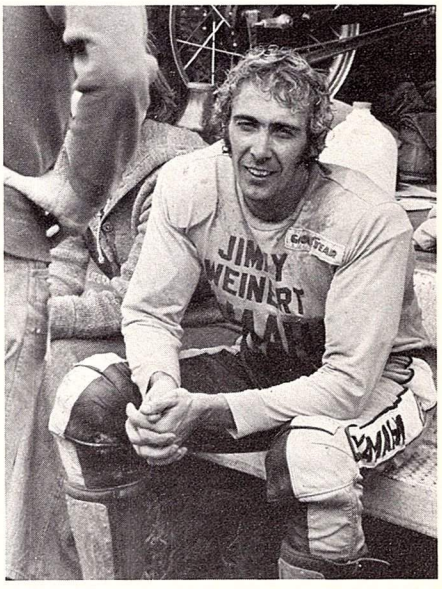
Story and Photography by Paul Boudreau

Before the Lexington, Ohio, race, Jim Weinert felt he would be content with a top three placing. He got more than he expected with a first overall as the Americans continued to thwart the efforts of the Championship Suzuki team of Roger DeCoster and Gerrit Wolsink.

The Mid-Ohio motocross track is a smooth, TT-style course, with one fast line all the way around and very few places to pass. To win, DeCoster would have to get good starts. But today the good starts belonged to the Americans. Marty Smith holeshot the first moto, with last week's winner Jim Pomeroy right behind. The two pulled away from the pack, leading a wild chase that saw them exchange the lead several times. Smith looked the smoothest, but Pomeroy was the fastest, and despite a short fumble the Bultaco star took the victory.

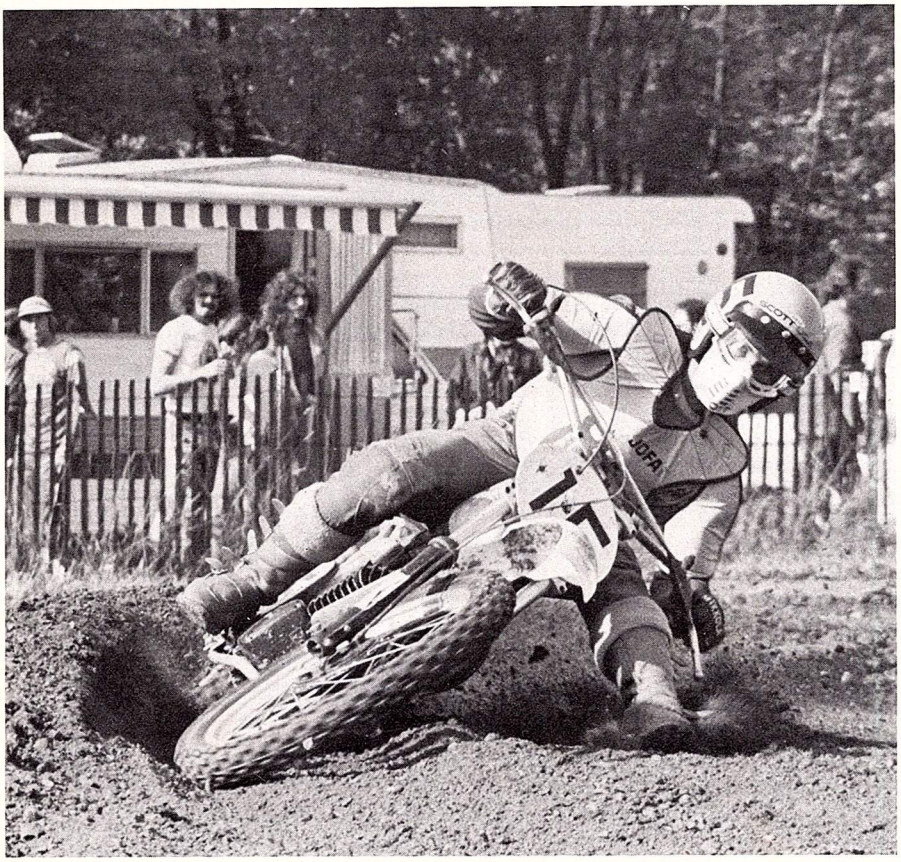
Running a solid third and choosing his moves wisely was Jim Weinert. Coming from poor starts and long laps spent trying to pass slower riders, DeCoster and Wolsink moved into the next two spots, followed by Kawasaki's Gary Semics. Tony DiStefano broke a chain on the last lap.

The second moto came close to being what the people had been waiting for. Tony DiStefano got the holeshot, with Weinert and Kent Howerton right behind. DeCoster,



After 80 minutes it all came down to this: Into the last turn, Weinert in the lead and on the gas, Howerton moving to the outside to pass, DeCoster setting them both up from the other side. A relieved Weinert after it was over.

Confidence is the key.



Young Husky star Kent Howerton started the second moto behind Weinert and followed him all the way home. It was his best finish in the series.

the man 21,000 people had come to see, got away dead last.

Weinert took over quickly from DiStefano and built a lead. Howerton settled into second, after Tony tossed it away, and Pomeroy moved into third. DeCoster started his charge from the pack.

Thus it was for the whole moto. Only Howerton, at this point, had a chance to spoil Weinert's victory. If Pomeroy passed Kent, or if Kent passed Weinert, Pomeroy would be the winner. If everybody stayed where they were, Weinert would win. Nobody thought about DeCoster, still struggling with the back markers, until he was suddenly breathing down Pomeroy's neck.

The complexion of the race had changed abruptly. If DeCoster could get by Pomeroy, which seemed quite possible, Weinert's victory would be assured. If DeCoster could catch Weinert, which seemed quite *im*possible considering Jim's commanding lead, Roger could win the whole thing. Those sitting down began to stand up.

The World Champion made his move on Pomeroy. It was a fifth gear downslope, with a small drop-off and a tight right at the bottom. DeCoster held it wide-open over the

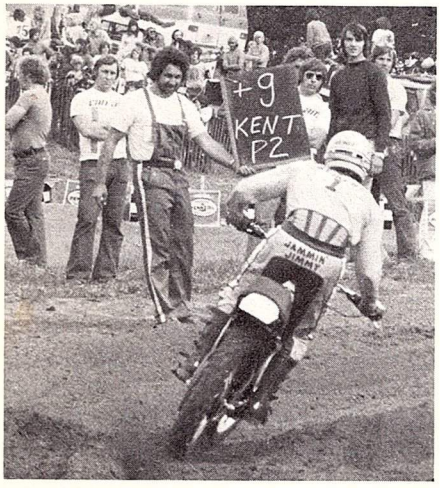
MID-OHIO

drop-off, hit a bump badly and went by Pomeroy standing it straight up and down on the front wheel. For a split second 21,000 people held their collective breath waiting for the Suzuki superstar to shatter his career all over the trees coming up at 60 miles per hour.

"I couldn't believe it!" said Pomeroy later. "Roger went blasting by me on the front wheel, and I said, "Whoa" and hit the brakes. He went into the berm way too high, and I got by underneath."

So DeCoster, recovering his poise quickly, was left with another lap behind Pomeroy before he could make a clean pass.

Nils-Arne Nilsson contemplates the thunder coming up behind.



Mechanic Bill Butchka's chalk board tells the story for Weinert: Howerton's right behind ya, buddy.

Good starts put veteran Jim West with the leaders in both motos.

Tony D. with the holeshot in the second moto. Either Kent Howerton (15) has three legs or Jim West (behind him) is doing The Bump.

East Coast Bultaco pilot John Savitski holeshot the first Support moto and put on a terrifying ride till Ellis nipped him in the end.

Too many neutrals in his factory 360 Bultaco cost Pomeroy the win. Here he thinks about what's going to come out of the back of Jim West's 400 Maico when that Metzeler starts spinning.

The first moto dice between Jim Pomeroy (24) and Marty Smith (12) for the lead put the whole crowd on the snow fences.

With a half lap to go in the last moto, when all the excitement was happening at the finish, Marty Tripes (8) snuck up behind Gerrit Wolsink (114) and tagged him for a position.

Riding hard to win the second moto, DeCoster (111) put a hair move on Pomeroy (24) and almost endoed.

With two laps remaining, Howerton was moving his Husqvarna close to Weinert's Yamaha. DeCoster was still a long way back, but was closing in at an unbelievable speed.

Meanwhile, back in the pack, Marty Tripes was into his weekly switch-on. In a breathtaking display, apparent to only those who knew enough to *always* keep an eye on Marty's progress, Ol' Slim burned by Smith, dispatched Karsmakers with a deft flick of his hefty hips and was now standing ramrod straight on the pegs creeping up on Gerrit Wolsink.

All eyes of the spectators were on Roger DeCoster as he ate up the ground separating him from Howerton and Weinert. But all eyes in the pits watched Tripes find his line in a short chute, hold it on in the back door and out the front, and blaze his 353 Bultaco past a startled Gerrit Wolsink who was cruising in sixth. Hoots rang out from the pits.

Attention turned back to the leaders. With five turns to go in the race, Weinert had tightened his line

MID-OHIO

considerably. Howerton was climbing all over Weinert, and DeCoster was closing in like a dart headed for a target. The people were screaming like maniacs.

Coming on to the last straightaway before the final left turn and the waiting checkered flag, Weinert's eyes were wild with excitement and he had the gas on all the way. Howerton was on Weinert's flank, setting his 360 Husky high for the final swoop on the inside. DeCoster, his eyes searching the ground inside Howerton's line, had the hammer all the way down. Weinert rode in too hot, missed his line and was bogging in the soft stuff. Howerton went for it, and DeCoster dove inside Howerton.

Northeast star Chuck Sun, riding his first Trans-AMA with the big boys, does a trick with his 360 Husky.

Eierstedt and Ellis battled all day for the Support class win. Here Ellis pokes a hole in Wayne Boyer's line.

Clutching his Bill Butchka-prepared factory 360 Monocross Yamaha from almost a dead stall in third gear, Jammin' Jimmy lunged across the finish line, snatching his second Trans-AMA victory by the length of half a motorcycle. The crowd went wild.

Afterwards, Weinert said, "I was coming down that straightaway on the gas, and all of a sudden I remembered. I said, 'Hey! I've got one more turn to go!' Almost blew it."

Pomeroy was down. Shifting problems had kept him off the pace the whole race.

Howerton felt good. He had raced his best race in a while.

Smith was bummed. A mistake early in the moto gave him a bent handlebar.

Lackey was disinterested. He was not liking the track, and had cruised all day.

DeCoster's only comment after congratulating the winner: "If I had only one-half more lap . . ."

250 SUPPORT

Jimmy Ellis continued his win streak with two more victories at Mid-Ohio, but not until after a considerable effort in taking the lead away from John Savitski, who led for most of the first moto, and Rich Eierstedt, who stole the show from Ellis in the second.

MID-OHIO

RESULTS
500 INTERNATIONAL

1) Jim Weinert (3-1) ..... Yamaha
2) Jim Pomeroy (1-4) ..... Bultaco
3) Roger DeCoster (5-3) ..... Suzuki
4) Gerrit Wolsink (4-7) ..... Suzuki
5) Kent Howerton (10-2) ..... Husqvarna
6) Marty Smith (2-13) ..... Honda
7) Jim West (8-8) ..... Maico
8) Pierre Karsmakers (7-11) ..... Honda
9) Gary Semics (6-12) ..... Kawasaki
10) Brad Lackey (14-5) ..... Husqvarna
11) Gaylon Mosier (9-10) ..... Maico
12) Tony DiStefano (15-9) ..... Suzuki
13) Steve Stackable (11-14) ..... Maico
14) Gilbert DeRoover (12-15) ..... CZ
15) Marty Tripes (24-6) ..... Bultaco
16) Charles Sun (16-16) ..... Husqvarna
17) Jan-Eric Sallqvist (13-26) ..... Kawasaki
18) Bob Harris (18-17) ..... CZ
19) Stewart Anderson (20-18) ..... Bultaco
20) Greg Theiss (23-21) ..... Suzuki

250 SUPPORT

1) Jim Ellis (1-1) ..... Can-Am
2) Rich Eierstedt (2-2) ..... Honda
3) Tim Hart (5-3) ..... Yamaha
4) John Savitski (3-5) ..... Bultaco
5) Gary Wise (4-8) ..... Bultaco
6) Mike Runyard (10-4) ..... Can-Am
7) Mickey Kessler (9-6) ..... Husqvarna
8) Terry Clark (11-7) ..... Husqvarna
9) Rick Burgett (6-12) ..... Yamaha
10) Bob Plumb (13-9) ..... Maico

24
OMEROY
RACER
2
ULTRACO

race test

It's an incredible record.

In 1969 two-time World 250 Champion Joel Robert left CZ for unheralded Suzuki and won another championship the first time out. He added three more to his string before beginning to lose his competitive edge in 1973. Meanwhile, Joel had talked Suzuki into hiring a young Belgian rider named Roger DeCoster. In his first year with the Japanese marque DeCoster also won a World Championship, and he won three more in the next four years. In 1975 Suzuki decided to contest the newly sanctioned 125cc Grand Prix class, and asked veteran 250 rider Gaston Rahier to do the honors.

SUZUKI RM370
THE DeCOSTER REPLICA

We went testing with DeCoster one day and he brought along a pair of stronger production fork springs which really helped the excessively soft front suspension.

Suzuki makes a serious bid to take over open class racing

Rahier and his untried RA125 Suzuki won 15 motos and had clinched the first 125 World Championship by the eighth race of the season. Three times Suzuki has introduced new motocross machines to a displacement class, and each time they have won a world championship. It's quite a record.

Despite its string of impressive victories in both international and U.S. motocross, Suzuki waited a long time to capitalize on its success with a truly competitive line of production racers. Certainly, the wins were advertised, along with the implication that the production models shared more than a coat of yellow paint with the championship machinery. But the resemblance was little more than paint deep, and in time the buying public became obviously — and crushingly — aware of that fact. Suzuki's sales of motocross models plummeted.

Whether because of this drop in sales or because it takes time, a great deal of time, to develop a competitive racing machine at a competitive price, Suzuki has finally released a line of production racers which are the true descendants of its championship machines. First to be released was the startling RM125, followed closely by RM250 and 370 models. It was a long wait, but the wait has been worthwhile. In our opinion, the RMs constitute the finest total line of racing machinery ever offered to the motocross public.

We were startled and impressed by the RM125, and titillated by the RM250 during our preview rides on the machine; but after long and at times skeptical testing of the RM370 there is only one word to sum up our reaction to the bike: we're stunned. This machine, a totally new model which is ancestor-less insofar as production machinery goes, is at present the standard by which all big-bore motocrossers must be judged.

If you were to compare photos, or even to set a production 370 alongside Roger DeCoster's RH370 championship bike, you would find that Suzuki has come as close as any company ever has to duplicating a megabuck grand prix machine in a production line racer. Of course, there are subtle, and not so subtle, differences between the two; but the RM is a genuine, full-blooded copy of the RH, as no less an expert than Roger DeCoster is the first to point out.

"It's a neat bike, but I sure do hate seeing them come out with a bike that's so together that it doesn't need any accessories or improvements."
—Al Baker

In a testing session at Saddleback Park during the Trans-AMA, Roger told us that he could take an RM around the track within a second of the time that he would clock aboard his factory bike. Skeptics might say that DeCoster could do the same aboard a moped, and that in any case he's bound to praise the new machine. We won't argue with that, but we will say that Roger proved conclusively to us that he was right as he put the RM through the wringer for us at the Saddleback session.

Roger's RH has special Kayaba forks and Kayaba gas shocks with remote reservoirs. His rear backing plate is full-floating, and there is liberal "damn the money" use of lightened parts and special metals. The RM370 has none of this

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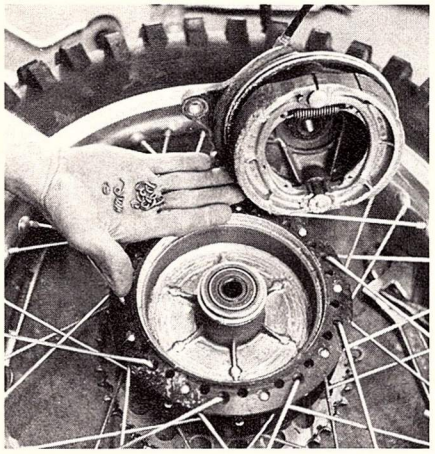
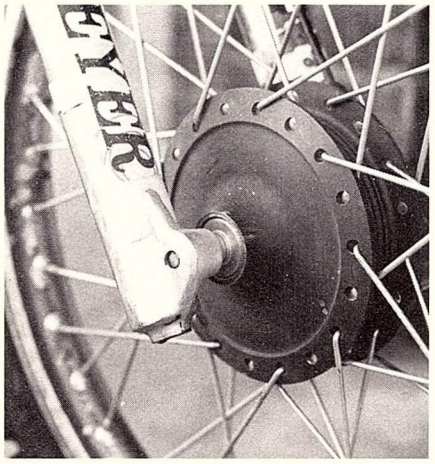
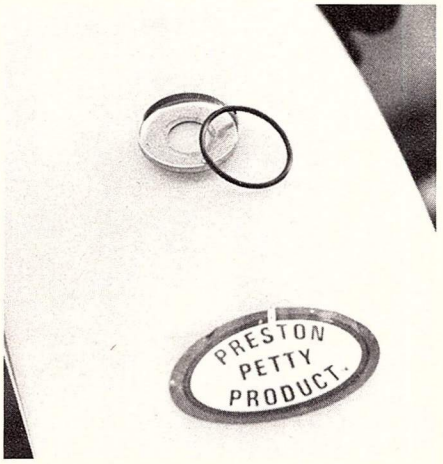


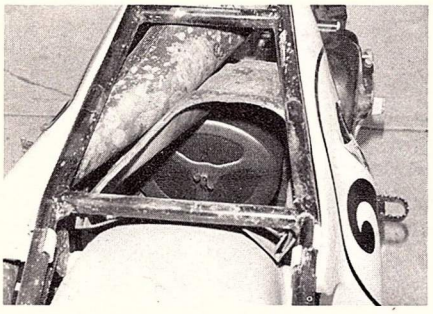
When this over-brittle brake spring broke, the rear wheel was thoroughly trashed. Suzuki sez they have already corrected the problem!



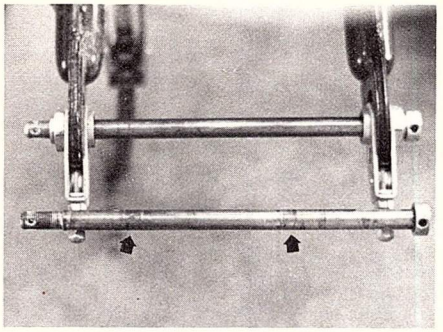
Front axle locks to the fork slider on one side while it screws into the other. This allows some flex on the over-eight-inch travel forks.



Dust cover on the rear wheel keeps the water out, but look for the O-ring when you pull the wheel off because it's easy to lose.



Access to the air cleaner is very restricted and although it works fine, it is a bummer to change. The air box has a valve at the bottom for the dissipation of water, etc.



The RM370 and 250 have the widest axle span in MX machinery. Our axle became difficult to remove because of the indents made by the bearings.

MOTOCROSS ACTION
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SUZUKI RM370

esoterica, but so what? Costs have to be cut somewhere, otherwise few could afford to buy the bike. Were you to bolt similar items onto an RM and diddle the cylinder a bit, you'd have an RH. Unless you're Roger DeCoster, you don't need one.

While the components of the RM370 may not rate as the ultimate in "factory trick," they're all first-rate. The frame is chrome moly, as are the handlebars. The front forks have an astounding 8.66 inches of travel, and the long-travel rear suspension gets 8.43 inches out of the gas/oil shocks. The engine features a stainless steel case induction reed valve fed by a 36mm Mikuni.

The RM's 372cc engine is under-square in design, bore and stroke being 77mm x 80mm. The package develops a claimed horsepower of 42 at 7000 rpm. That's a lot, but more importantly, it's the right kind of power. In fact, we feel that the RM370 has the best power of any open bike we've ridden.

"This guy shows up at the track with this new RM370 and jumps into the lead in each moto. He was a squid before and ran midpack, and now all of a sudden he's leading. I had a hell of a time getting by him."
—Jeff Blix

Back to the catalog. The plastic fenders are strong and durable. The seat is firm, yet plenty comfortable enough for motocross. The gas tank holds a shade over two gallons, enough for a full 45-minute moto plus two laps. It also has a good configuration for leg positioning, and is easy to hold with the knees.

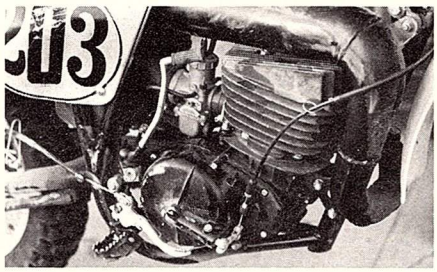
All levers and controls are well placed and easy to operate once you become accustomed to the bike. The footpegs are serrated, and of excellent design. Alloy rims are standard, but which kind you get will depend upon when and where you buy the bike. Ditto the tires. Rim possibilities: Takasago, D.I.D and Akront. Tires: IRC, Bridgestone and Yokohama. Our test bike had Takasago rims and IRC tires. We didn't like either, and slipped on some Bridgestone rubber instead.

THE RIDE'S THE THING

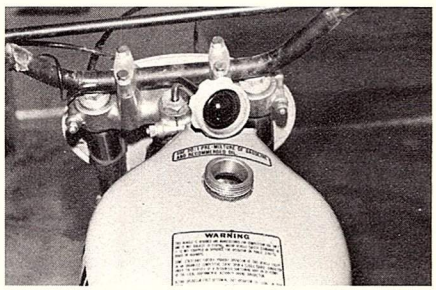
But the best package of components means nothing if the bike isn't right. The RM370 is right, very right.

The long-throw kickstarter brings the engine to life fairly easily. Using the choke was usually unnecessary, and once the engine was warm first-kick starts were common. Selecting neutral while the engine is running is difficult, and not much easier when stopped. It's a tall bike to straddle, with a whopping 10½ inches of ground clearance, but at least no one will be able to say that the bike was designed with the Japanese rider in mind. It is definitely a medium-to-large rider's machine. The handlebars are extremely wide, and set a bit far forward for our liking, but then, it's a DeCoster replica, and you know how he rides. The grips are good, and the brake and clutch levers were easy to use with one or two fingers.

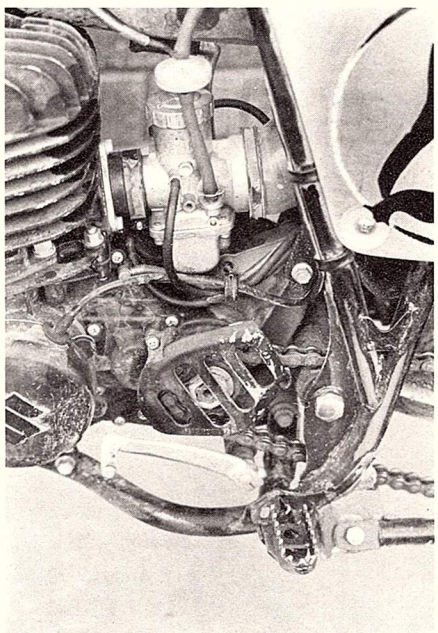
The RM is a holeshot machine. Acceleration is excellent, and the ratios of the five-speed gearbox are equal to any motocross conditions you're likely to encounter. Top end has got to be in the eighties with the stock gearing, and yet the spacing of the gears allows you to pull second-gear starts off the line. Shifting is



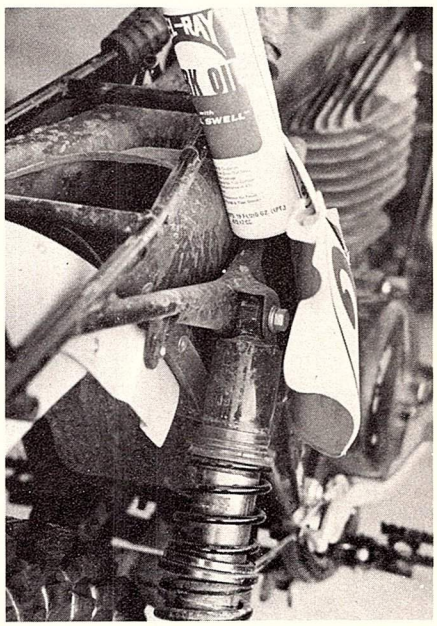
The RM370 is under-square with a 77 x 80mm bore and stroke. The 36mm Mikuni has the funky pull pin choke setup. Pipe is tucked nicely and even though we rubbed the paint off, it was never noticeable.



The extremely light alloy gas tank holds 2.1 gallons, enough for 45-minute motos plus two laps. A check valve in gas cap keeps the gas in the tank when inverted. We used Bel-Ray at 40 to 1, same as DeCoster uses in his racer.



Shifting the RM370 is almost too easy and we had a problem of overshifting and finding a false neutral between second and third. The slightest nudge shifts the five-speed gears as if it were a 125.



Pop the sidecover out and you have access to the three preload settings of the gas Kayabas. You'd better be Popeye to unload the spring tension to move the circlip for the combo 101/226-pound springs.

effortless, so easy that it actually becomes a problem. It seems that the detent of the shifter is very soft, allowing the selector to move from gear to gear with only the slightest nudge of the foot. We would sometimes overshift and find ourselves in a false neutral, especially when shifting into third. The RM teaches you to be more positive in your gear selection, penalizing you for sloppiness. That's probably to the good. But if we had our druthers, we'd like a more positive feel in the selection of gears.

The basic grunt of the RM engine allows you to go around tight tracks using only two or three of the five gears available. The engine isn't at all pipey, though on a slippery, hard-packed track with lousy rubber on the rear (the IRC) you'd never know it.

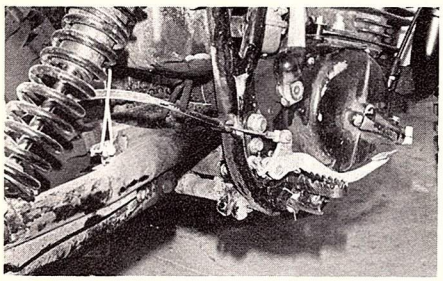
Like the Husky 360, the RM370 is not a fun bike to ride slowly. The power is always there, lurking just at the explosion level and waiting for a call. Grab a handful at the wrong time, and you can get into trouble. But you have to gas the bike hard to really enjoy it and to realize its potential.

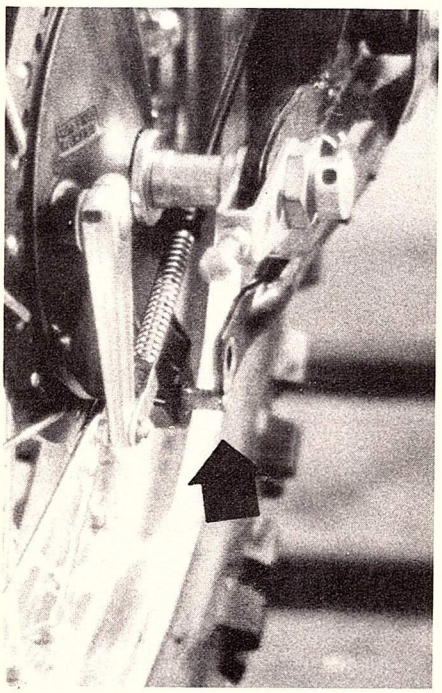
Attacking a course hard puts the RM in its element. The suspension is designed to work best under the stress of speed. Running at medium speeds finds the bike handling like a tractor, as the suspension follows every undulation of the terrain without benefit of much damping. As you increase speed, it becomes more comfortable, more manageable and more positive.

We had initial problems with our test bike. The front end was too soft, and heavier fork oil didn't cure it. We opted for a stronger fork spring, an option which will be available by the time you read this. The rear shocks have three preload positions, and though we used the highest position, it still wasn't enough. This was especially noticeable when the forks had the lighter springs.

As with any LTR suspension, going into a turn at slow speeds makes the bike tend to turn more stiffly, fighting the line you choose to push it through. More speed through the turn is the usual solution to this problem, and the RM is no exception. Ridden correctly, smacking berms and squaring off corners are easy on the RM, and a good set of rubber makes it even easier. The Bridgestones we substituted gave us the best feel for the local hard-packed track conditions, though really serious riders will probably want to go with Trelleborgs or Metzelers, depending on local track conditions.

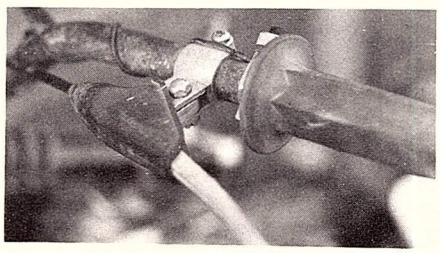
Continued





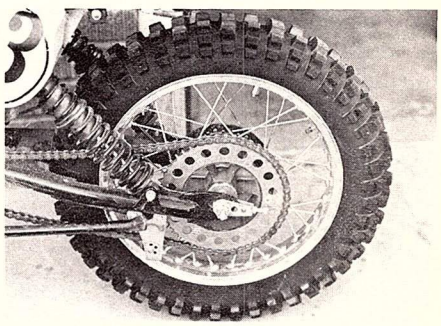
It would have been nice to have Suzuki use the floating rear brake as we assume the bracket, below the brake assembly, is for. Our test bike had to have the brake stay arm bent to conform to the backing plate bolt because of the bracket being misaligned when welded to the swingarm.

Nice, thoughtful touches like cable guides, number plate extensions to clear cables, serrated folding pegs, easily adjustable levers and controls, accessible kill button, etc., give the RM class.

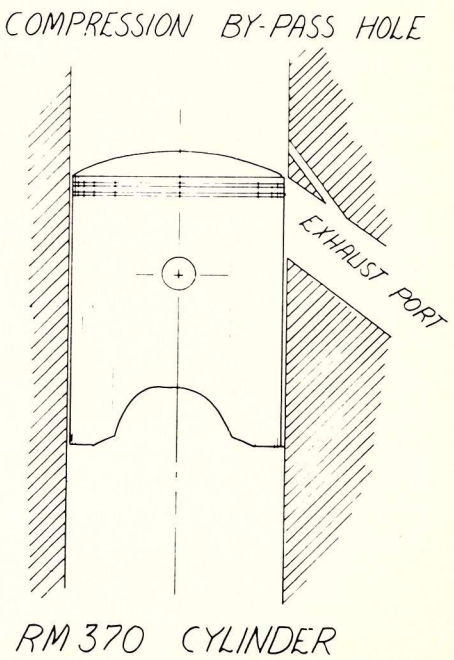


Alloy levers take a lot of abuse; we cracked one anyway. Lever covers have no snaps and give quick access for adjustment.

Our pipe mount broke; don't they all? The muffler, small as it is, made the bike surprisingly quiet.



Wheels need constant attention because of soft rims and a tendency for the sprocket bolts to loosen. Using duct tape instead of the rubber rim strip helped, as did Loctite on the sprocket bolts. The nipples next to the rimlock will be the first to loosen.



SUZUKI RM370

Braking is excellent, front and rear. We had some initial problems finding the rear brake lever because of its tucked-in position underneath the clutch cover. The pedal does have a serrated edge for your boot to grab, but a couple of spots of weld on the flat of the lever help. The rear brake is cable-operated, and has a spring guide as protection along the swingarm. Nevertheless, we managed to wrap it up once when the rider's foot got kicked back coming out of a turn, destroying the cable. The cable also tends to pick up dirt over a period of time, making it inoperable.

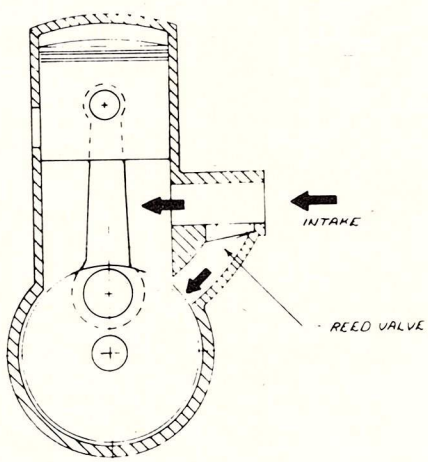
There is some rear wheel chatter when braking, but it's not a serious problem. While the rear unit isn't a full floating number, there is a tab welded onto the frame for a floating hub assembly. It wouldn't be difficult to make the conversion yourself, and this is actually one of the few things we can think of that can be changed for the better on the RM.

CHEAP THRILLS MAINTENANCE

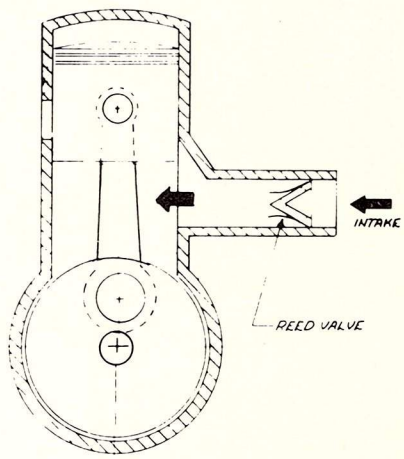
Suzuki recommends that you premix 20:1 no matter what the oil manufacturers say. Since some of our favorite people (as well as some of our least favorite people) are oil manufacturers, we shined on that advice, running Bel-Ray at 40:1 with the stock jetting. That's what Roger does, and if it's good enough for him . . . We experienced no problems, despite the fact that we were testing in the middle of a heat wave. Using the same mixture under a variety of weather conditions, we occasionally altered the jetting, ranging from a 280 to a 310 main jet position, with 290 being the usual setting. The carb itself is easy to get at and work on.

The RM370's air cleaner setup is tight and awkward. Initial access is easy, with just two bolts securing the seat, but from that point you need a flashlight and a very small pair of hands in order to position the air cleaner properly. Greasing the base of the air cleaner for the foam element is almost impossible because of the configuration of the air box.

The RM owner will have to get used to tightening things. The spokes of both wheels and the rear sprocket



RM 250, 370 REED VALVE DESIGN



CONVENTIONAL REED VALVE DESIGN

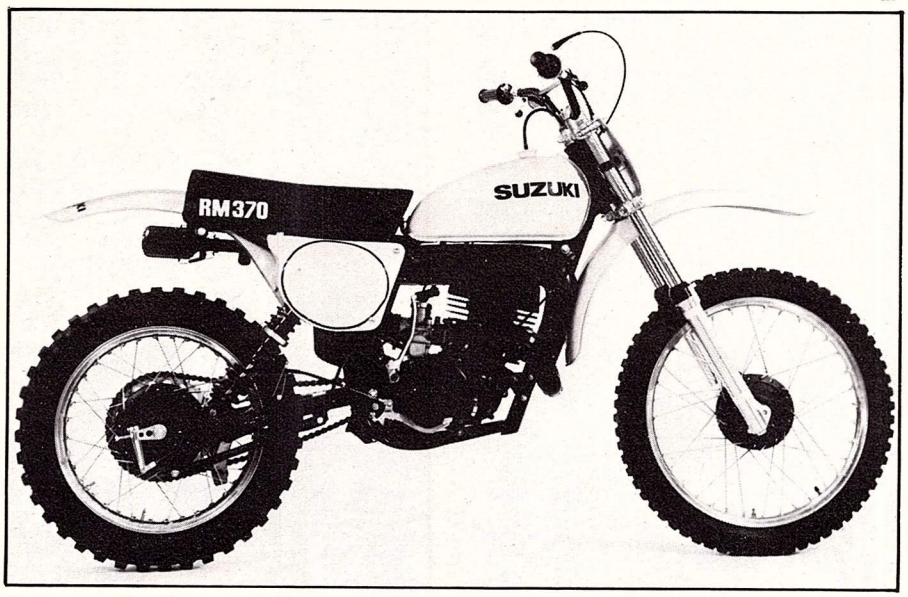
are critical areas. During break-in you shouldn't go more than a couple of laps before checking the spokes, and even after they've seated, treat them with respect. One critical place to check is the spoke nipples next to the rimlocks, as these will loosen up even when the other spokes haven't.

We broke a brake spring in the rear backing plate and destroyed the wheel before we knew it. The trouble was traced to a very brittle spring end, and Suzuki assures us that the problem has already been corrected. Another problem lies in the long span of the rear axle. It puts a terrific load on the bearing points, and the axle bends slightly, making it difficult to remove the axle after a while.

By and large, the openness and simplicity of design of the RM370 make it an easy bike to maintain. Components are all of top quality, with excellent cable guides and locknuts. The piston porting of the engine is relatively mild, meaning that the bike is not likely to self-destruct. In fact, with basic preventive maintenance, it could be as bulletproof a package as any competitive bike in the open class, perhaps more so.

AND FINALLY

All things considered, the RM370 is the best open class machine currently on the market, especially for the serious racer. While it will probably demand too much of the average novice, it can put better riders into the winner's circle with a consistency and decisiveness which make it worth every penny of its relatively low selling price. Parts should be easy to get, and the bike doesn't require that the owner lay out an additional couple of hundred for expensive accessory items or hop-ups. We think that tracks around the country are going to be hit by a deluge of RM370s in the coming months. And they're going to be winning.



SPECIFICATIONS

Make ..... Suzuki
Model RM370
Country of Manufacture ..... Japan
Retail Price $1545

ENGINE

Type:
Two-stroke single, piston port, case induction
Bore & Stroke ..... 77mm x 80mm
Displacement 372cc
Compression Ratio (corrected) . 6.9:1
Cylinder ..... Iron, four ports
Carburetion ..... 36mm Mikuni
Ignition ..... Suzuki PEI electronic
Lubrication ..... Pre-mix, 20:1
Air Filter ..... Wet foam

TRANSMISSION

Type ..... Five-speed
Ratios:
1) 2.071:1
2) 1.625:1
3) 1.263:1
4) 1.000:1
5) 0.869:1
Primary ..... Gear, wet clutch
Ratio 2.384:1
Drive Chain ..... #520

SUSPENSION

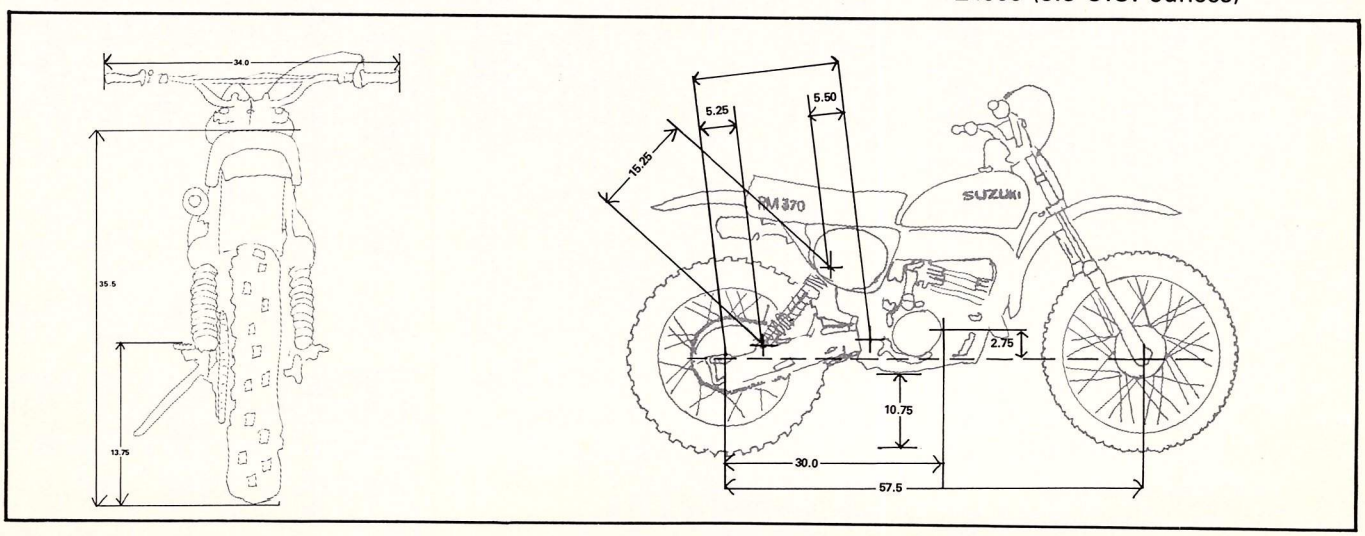
Front: Telescopic, hydraulic dampers
Rear:
Lay-down gas/oil shocks, three-way adjustable
Travel:
Front ..... 8.66 inches
Rear ..... 8.4 inches

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase ..... 57.5 inches
Ground Clearance ..... 10.75 inches
Seat Height ..... 35.50 inches
Track Weight ..... 240 pounds
Weight Bias 45/55

CAPACITIES

Fuel ..... 2.1 U.S. gallons
Transmission:
1000cc (2.11 U.S. pints)
Forks:
245cc (8.3 U.S. ounces)



interview

GASTON RAHIER

The new 125cc World Champion talks about winning big, winning bikes, Marty Smith and what comes next

Between the U.S. and Canadian 125 grands prix, MOTOCROSS ACTION managed to get together with World Champion Gaston Rahier and talk to him about his career and about motocross in general. Present at the interview were Dick Miller (DM), Gunnar Lindstrom (GL), Paul Boudreau (PB), Chet Heyberger (CH) and Suzuki's Jeff Burtt (JB).

DM: Let's start with some personal things, Gaston. First of all, how old are you?

GR: 27.

DM: And how long have you been racing?

GR: I began when I was 16 years old.

DM: Then you've been racing for 11 years — that's a long time.

GR: Yes, a long time.

DM: And when did you turn professional?

GR: Professional? Well, I started as a 16-year-old in the junior class, then I go into international class at 17 and race just in Belgium, in 250, and working for my father.

DM: So you both raced and worked?

GR: Yes. Then in 1970 I became Belgian Champion in the 250. I raced for CZ, but before I couldn't race in the grands prix. Always the same problem. Before 1970, Joel (Robert). Then Roger (DeCoster), Sylvain (Geboers) and Marcel (Wertz) were before me. I have fifth position on the team, so I have no chance to go to the grand prix. Always three, sometimes four get to go — but never five. I always stay home. Then in 1970 I become Belgian Champion and I have a chance to go to the grands prix, and also to the U.S. (for the Trans-AMA). In 1971 I raced five, maybe six, grands prix because CZ say they pay. But they not pay! (laughter). After seven races, and they not pay, I stop. I stay in Belgium and race.

DM: Did you start racing on a CZ?

GR: No, I started on a Bultaco.

DM: And then to CZ?

GR: Yes, in 1967.

DM: And you rode CZ until you switched to Suzuki?

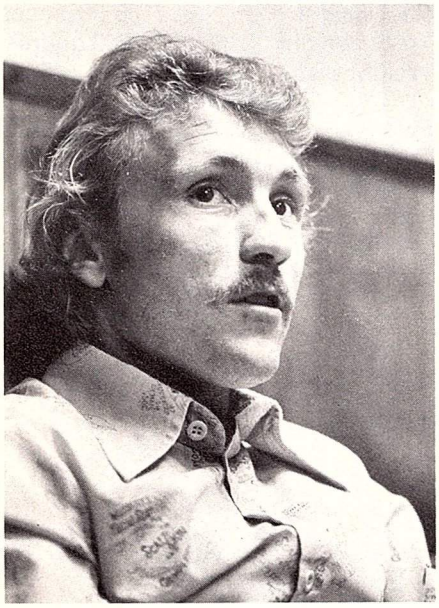
GR: No. I rode in 1973 with Husqvarna.

DM: That's right, I remember. But not for too long?

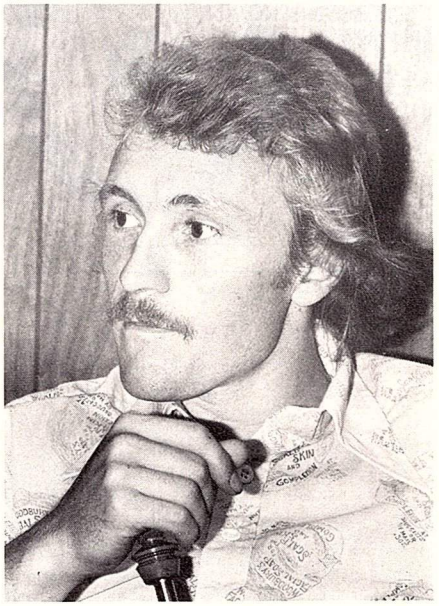
GR: No, six months. Torleif (Hansen) got hurt, and I raced his bike. It was a five-speed, frame made of aluminum.

DM: That's when they (the frames) were breaking.

GR: They only broke one, but that was enough (laughter). Then I raced five grands prix and had fourth position in the world championship. I was leading the German GP for maybe 30 minutes, and Joel pass me very easy. Suzuki . . . (laughter). So I finished second, with a



"I ride (in Ohio) and stay always in the seat. Always in the jump I'm sitting. And I say, 'Goddamn! Not possible to drive like this!'"



"And I stop at Joel's and he have two girls, striptease girls, French girls. And they're drinking champagne."

"Then he (Joel) go back to Belgium and say, 'No problem. Gaston is World Champion. Bike is too fast!'"

flat tire. Then Suzuki came to me and say, "OK, you want to go to Suzuki?" I had a contract — well, not really a contract — with Husqvarna. Just bike and spare parts. So I say OK, and they say, "You must go six months to Japan. If you win, OK, we make contract." They wanted me to go for Japanese Championship. And they say, "big money."

DM: On the 125?

GR: 125 and 250.

GL: Yes, they don't have 500 in Japan.

GR: So I go to Japan and race and win everything in 1972.

GL: That was good for Suzuki in Japan, for selling bikes — and also for building new bikes and testing stuff.

GR: Yes. Every day I drive a motorcycle. Test and test. Sometimes 50 sets of shocks, then tomorrow forks, and always, always something new

DM: It really helped you, right?

GR: Yes, very good!

DM: I mean, you learn to ride when you don't want to ride.

GR: I ride and I'm in good condition.

GL: And learning, too.

GR: I go to the man rsponsible for engines. I go to the shop for front forks, and they say to me "working like that or like this." And I learn good.

DM: So you know more about what the bike is doing than most riders do?

GR: Yes. Last winter I go to Japan and work with Joel on 250 bike, and Joel say, "What do you think?" because Joel doesn't know.

GL: Joel doesn't know much about bikes.

GR: Nothing, nothing. Last year Roger and Gerrit go in January to test 500. And I go for 125 and 250. Not Willi Bauer, not Joel. Joel comes in and has nothing to say. He say, always, OK, OK.

GL: When you get there (to Japan), do they have a lot of bikes made up, or do they have one bike and make changes on it all the time?

GR: Two bikes, and one bike stays the same, always the same.

GL: So you ride around the track and they check your time?

GR: Yes. Take time, stop, change, mark points. Ten points for best, no money is five points, marginal, six or seven is a little bit better. We test brakes, everything.

DM: How many people are with you when you go out to test? Six, eight . . .?

GR: Twenty people.

GL: You have your suspension specialists, and fork specialists and rear suspension specialists, and engine specialists . . . like that. And you have to answer many questions.

GR: I stop and say, "OK, get the engine man." And he say, "What do you think about acceleration? What about the bumps? What do you think on the jumps?" Everything. Then suspension, same thing.

GL: Do you have a good track to test on in Japan?

GR: Yes, they have everything. It's very good for testing.

GL: A special track for Suzuki?

GR: Yes, only for Suzuki. Sand course, mud course — everything. That's no problem. Very good, you know.

GL: Did you take your wife and children with you?

GR: Yes, and I stay in his (the head of European Suzuki) house. He say, "You can bring wife and children, everything, no problem." So I come to Japan, home — good home — always have one driver, you know, chauffeur, and every morning he pick me up, go to motocross. Then go back and pick up my wife to go shopping. He stay always in my home. Because I no speak Japanese and I don't understand nothing.

GL: Did he drive a Honda car? (laughter)

GR: No, he have a Datsun car, a Mazda . . . factory have every car.

GL: So they treated you very well?

GR: Yes!

DM: You know, I heard they were going to sign you long before they did.

GR: Yeah, in 1970.

DM: The fact is, Joel mentioned it to me. And so did Roger, though you hadn't signed yet.

GR: No, not at that time. At that time Suzuki wanted contract with me, but not for good money. You know, in 1970 they just wanted me to go with Joel, and Joel riding, and that time I said "No," not interested. Because at that time I rode for CZ, and because Joel change I say maybe I have good chance at CZ, riding together with Roger.

DM: Then Roger went to Suzuki.

GR: Yes (laughing), and Roger went to Suzuki. And after, I go.

DM: What made you decide to switch to riding 125 in Europe?

GR: After last race (1974) I go to the reception and Suzuki say, "OK, what about next year?" I say, "I don't know, 250?" And he say, "Why you not race 125?" and I say, "I race only 250 — I like

GASTON RAHIER

this class." And he say, "You raced good. You raced in Japan with 125, you win many times, and it is good for you to race 125." "It's not so good for me," I say, "no money." And he say, "Oh, no problem. Suzuki pay everything — and pay more, much *more."*

DM: They'd pay more if you'd race 125?

GR: Yes.

DM: That makes a difference.

GR: Yes, it was much better. Because I didn't lose money, I made more money.

GL: At that time, did they have the new bike then? The RM125?

GR: No.

GL: They hadn't even started on it?

GR: No. But I said, "I don't know." And they say, "If you want to ride, you say now which bike you like and what you like and everything. Then you come in January for one month and test everything." Because Suzuki must be world champion in 125, it's very important. Now it's our first year, and every time Suzuki entry come in first in first year.

DM: And with no bike to sell.

GR: Yes.

GL: Yeah. The first time they had a 250, Joel won. The first time they had a 500, Roger won. So now they wanted to win in the 125 class and make it three in a row.

DM: Well it's also a fact that they never had a bike to sell that they won with. This is the first time that they have a world championship and they also have the same motorcycle to sell.

GR: Yes now, first time.

DM: And this will be tremendous.

GR: Yeah. Suzuki says, "Before motocross is only for prestige, not necessarily for advertising or nothing, just prestige. Now the economy is not so good and it's necessary to work on motocross. Much advertising about motocross. So necessary to have three class. And if you want, you're the first man for 125 class because you're small and you're perfect. You know everything about test because you stay with company for three years now. If you no like, OK." Then I say, "Well, maybe there's a good chance for me."

DM: Yeah. When Roger told me last year that he thought you were going to ride the 125, it occurred to me that that was perfect. And I also know what I would feel about that kind of switch. That is, the 125 doesn't have the same prestige that the 250 and 500 have. Like, you're World Champion right now in the 125. That should have the same prestige as a 250 or 500 championship. But do you feel that it does?

GR: Yes, I feel this now.

DM: But how about before?

GR: Before, I say maybe it's not good if I go 125. Then I say to the company, that's no good if I go 125 and not win the championship. Everybody would say, oh, no good. He go to the children, and still no champion. So I say, "Impossible." But the company say, "No problem." You can have everything you want. Money, everything. And I say, maybe it's good, huh? So I go 125. And Akira (Watanabe) too.

DM: How old is Watanabe?

GR: 21.

GL: Is he the best Japanese rider?

GR: Yes, he's the best.

DM: Faster than Sugio?

GR: Yes.

DM: Sugio was very good over here in the Trans-AMA.

GR: Yes, I think for Japanese or American track maybe Sugio is best. Both are very fast, high speed. But now I think the best rider from Japan for every country, you know, for world position, is Akira Watanabe. Because, you know, he can ride mud and everything. And he is the best because he understands you should go more slowly sometimes. Like last Sunday (at the USGP) he rode behind Sugio, and he say he could pass, but maybe crash. And he was thinking, "My position in the world championship is good because I'm now in fourth position. And Sugio's not. So OK, take it easy." Another guy, Masuda or Sugio, would be on the gas. And be very happy that yesterday no crash. But maybe tomorrow, crash. That's no good.

"And Jim Pomeroy go to same place, same training room. And first time he say, 'No necessary this training,' but first time working out Jim change color!"

DM: Talking about the GPs, did you hear any reasons from the riders about why they didn't come to the 500 GP?

GR: Too expensive.

DM: Roger told me that Jaak van Velthoven (of Yamaha) offered to pay his own way and they told him no.

GR: Yes, that was different. Jaak and Ake Jonsson, they had no good results at the beginning (of the year). Then Yamaha decided they are not coming, because Yamaha have not so good sales and if you're coming (to the U.S.) you should have good results. If not, it's worse. If you come, you must have good results, huh? And Yamaha say, impossible to win, so better not come. Then after Russia, when Jonsson and Jaak were very good, Jaak ask and company say OK . . . .

DM: Well, Jaak is just getting better now after his accident.

GR: Yes, just now. And he say, I want to go to the U.S. I pay myself everything — mechanic, motorcycle, everything.

DM: The *whole* thing?

GR: Yes, everything. But Yamaha say no.

DM: Ake was in third place.

GR: Yes, third; now he go back four, five places. (Actually, Ake lost only one place, but many points—Ed.) *So Yamaha say no. I see Jaak one week before USGP at training track with new Yamaha and ask if that one for the U.S. He say, no, just for England.*

DM: Well, you know, I called Yamaha here and they got very upset with me for asking why van Velthoven and Jonsson didn't come. They didn't want to tell me. They told me it was none of my business, like go screw yourself. And I said, well, I'm just trying to find out, and I know that Jaak wanted to come over and pay his own way. And they said, well, that's none of your business, and we don't know why you want to know. And I just said, well, I think it's important.

GR: Yes, I don't understand this. Yamaha is now a little bit funny.

DM: I think their money is . . .

GR: Yes, money is a big problem. Also, the racing department has (Giacomo) Agostini — very expensive. I talked to Itaki Suzuki, you know, Tarao's brother. I ask him and he say difficult because all racing department (at Yamaha) working now only for Agostini. Because that man's very expensive and not winning. Much working new 750, new 500 for Agostini. If no win, maybe stop Agostini next year and work again in motocross. (Ed. note—According to Yamaha in the U.S., Yamaha has withdrawn from *all* European racing.) *In Belgium, Yamaha is now in fourth position in sales. Also in France. It's very difficult. Before, in first position.*

DM: Not many people buying their new bikes? Why?

GR: Too heavy. First bike, everybody buy it. It was different, oh fantastic! But it is very difficult for setting everything up, you know, the monoshock. So there were too many problems, much work.

GL: And what do they buy now?

GR: In Belgium, Husqvarna, Maico — much Maico — Bultaco, and now Suzuki sell many in motocross.

DM: Is the RM out yet?

GR: The RH.

DM: The *RH* Suzuki?

GR: The RH250 and the RN360.

DM: They aren't selling them here.

GR: Maybe start now, huh?

DM: Well, you haven't spent much time here, but did you see the number of bikes that were in Ohio? Are there many riders getting involved in motocross in Europe still, or is it declining? Is there more or less interest in motocross in Europe now than there was before? Can

people still afford it, or is it becoming too expensive?

GR: No, now many people are very interested in motocross.

DM: More than before?

GR: Yes, more, much more, because in Europe cars are very expensive and very difficult for racing, you know, and people say, "OK, now motorcycle more interesting." You know, this year the people looking at each motocross average about two or three thousand more. And many young people buy motocross bike, like before in bicycling or football. Now coming in for motorcycle. It's very good.

DM: Do you think because they're riding on the street they have more interest now?

GR: Yes. And in Europe it is impossible to go riding fast on the street, like road racing, and there are no motorcycle parks to ride like here. Not the same. So you must ride motocross. And everybody buy a 125, huh? Because for 175 you need license, but not for 125. Also cheap, not much gas, so many people buy. You see now in Paris, everybody have trailbikes. Many, many, many. You don't understand this. Everybody stopped motorcycling there years ago, and now completely different. I ask Suzuki people in France, Mr. Bonet, you know, and he say the business come back and the big business is from the 50cc to the 185. That's the best sale.

DM: I think that's true here, too.

GR: And this man say, if you are winning in the French country with 125 it's very good, because advertising is easy because it's a 125 bike. If you're riding a road race, maybe 500cc, it's not so good. Everyone say, that's not the same bike. And when I am winning the grands prix, much advertising, every week.

DM: Because they can buy the same bike you're riding, almost.

GR: Yes, same bike. At the French GP all the people were young, from 16 to 24 or 25 — not so many old. If you go to 500 class, many old people looking.

CH: So actually, in Europe there have been as many people at the 125 GPs as there have been at the 250 and 500?

GR: Yes. And now in France, you know, you have maybe 25,000 people at the 125 GP, but for the 500 only maybe 15,000.

DM: That's quite a difference.

GR: Yes, but in Belgium it's different. In Belgium, if you go to the 500 you have maybe 35,000 people, if you go to the 125 maybe 12,000. Because Belgian people think a little different — they know motocross.

GL: Well, they know Roger and the other big names.

DM: At the 500 GP here they advertised 36,000 people.

GR: That's good. But in Ohio (at the 125 GP), nothing.

DM: 5000, maybe.

(KEN OLAUSSON PHOTO)

"And after race I go to reception and the Suzuki guy says, 'OK, what about next year?' I say, 'I don't know, 250?' And he say, 'Why you not race 125?' And I say, 'I only race 250.'"

GR: Maybe. The people in Ohio say 8000. I don't think so.

DM: I think here at Carlsbad, 18 to 20,000. That's still a good crowd, especially since only five Europeans were here.

GR: And at the 125 they said 18 Europeans were coming.

GL: Who was going to pay for it? Were they going to pay their own way?

GR: Yes. Eighteen riders coming, huh? And have maybe five.

DM: It's too expensive for the riders.

GR: Yes. I don't understand why they don't pay a little bit more for starting. $160 is not enough for coming from Europe.

DM: How much did they pay you for going to Ohio?

GR: $300.

DM: Yeah, but at first they were only going to pay you $160. Everybody got $160, *everybody*. Even the Americans.

GR: Yes.

DM: At Carlsbad they paid everybody $160, that's all.

GR: It's too small. Not enough, huh? I think for an American rider, it may be OK if you come in an airplane . . . .

DM: Yes. You can fly across the U.S. for $150.

GR: And for me it's not a problem . . .

DM: What if you didn't have a sponsor?

GR: Yes. Suzuki pays everything, you know. The $300 for me, it's just extra money. I know many riders from Europe wanted to go to the GP, but if $160 is all they offer and they ask $500 . . . It's no good.

DM: Well, it costs $1000 for round trip plane fare.

GL: But, you know, before this year many riders were coming with no pay.

GASTON RAHIER

They think it's very easy in America, fun; you know, a new country. But now everybody has been here so many times, and it's not so easy, so now they'll have to start paying for the guys to get here. In '74 a lot of riders got burnt, and that's why they didn't come in '75. They got burnt, and they said, "No, not again." I think if the organizers want more Europeans next year, they'll have to start paying. As a matter of fact, I think the riders' organization could do something about it.

DM: Have you guys talked about having a riders' organization?

GR: Yes, for the first time two years ago. After the first GP two years ago. The riders say, OK, want plane and everything, with the bikes inside. And that time is OK.

GL: Yes, you had a charter plane and also many Belgian spectators coming. But not this year.

GR: No, forget it. I don't know; I don't understand. I asked the 125 riders, but it's difficult because everybody's young.

DM: They don't know, they're taken advantage of.

GR: The good riders now are . . . DeRoover. There's Baborovsky, Churavy and they're Czechoslovakian people. It's impossible to ask these people. They say, OK, always OK. They have no idea what they're saying.

DM: What about (Andre) Malherbe (former 125 European Champion). He's very fast, isn't he?

GR: Yes, in two or three grands prix is very fast. Two grands prix is very fast, then condition maybe not so good, not so strong. And everybody getting fast, and he try and try and he crash two times. And he twist his wrist. Then not do so good. So Zundapp say no, you no more in grand prix. U.S. and Canada not necessary, you stay home. Very expensive maybe for just holiday.

DM: Well, let's talk about the new Suzukis some more. You know, the RMs. We don't have the RHs here. What's the difference between what you race and what we can buy?

GR: Yes. The difference is in the front forks — little bit different — Maico type. Same as 250. In the beginning my bike was the same as yours (the RM), then Suzuki make new type (of forks) for Roger and Joel and send me same type also. I try, and now stay this.

DM: Are they longer travel?

GR: Yes.

DM: How long?

GR: 215mm (8.46 inches).

DM: What about engine power?

GR: Power, yes. My engine has more power.

DM: Higher rpm?

GR: Yes, 11,500 maximum. The RM maybe 10,500. Cylinder is exactly the same, only the ports are cleaned. And the rear suspension, it has the gas reservoir; but no good for small races (non-professional) I think because is very easily broken, you know. I try both in Japan. You ride 30 minutes, you feel same. Just after 40 minutes, getting (the stock shock setup) little bit soft. That's the only problem. And it's (the reservoir setup) heavy. Last year (1974) very heavy, now lighter.

DM: Have you broken any of the Kayabas in races?

GR: No.

DM: You haven't? Because some of the bigger bikes have been breaking.

GR: Yes Roger, before. This year, no problem. Because before the shaft was smaller and would always break.

DM: He's breaking inside — the pistons.

GR: Yes, because very hard work.

GL: You have a lot of travel in the rear.

GR: Yes, 200mm (7.87 inches).

DM: What does your race bike weigh?

GR: 173 pounds.

DM: With gas?

GR: No, nothing. No oil or gas. I have

(KEN OLAUSSON PHOTO)

every bolt titanium. And aluminum swingarm. Wheels the same (as the RM), aluminum tank, also frame same.
DM: Do you gusset the frame?
GR: No.
GL: No welding, huh?
GR: No. Frame exactly the same.
DM: Footpeg and everything?
GR: Same, same. Except now my footpegs are not exactly same because I want a little bit higher.
DM: Higher?
GR: Yes, because I am small (laughter). Same thing the tank. The first idea is small tank, and Suzuki working only on one (tank), design same for Roger and everybody at one time. But if small tank, the 500 would not have enough gas. So I say, OK, same tank for every bike, so we use larger tank. On my own 125, 250 and 500 I use same tank. Easy change.
DM: Well, at the Ohio race, that was an RH bike? Sent over here for you special just for this race and for Canada?
GR: Yes, and then Belgium, because you know . . .
DM: Oh, is it going to be sent back to Belgium?
GR: Yes.
JB: It's lots different than the bike he had in Czechoslovakia or anywhere else. It was flown here as a new bike. He uses two or three bikes a season.
GR: Yes, I'm using two bikes in Europe, two new bikes. Zundapp and every (other) bike getting faster. Every factory working. You see new CZs? Completely different.
GL: Yes, a new engine.
GR: Yes, very small, but more power. Zundapp working on long travel. First time. Now same as Suzuki — long front forks. I always tell company, you must work more and more every week — every second grand prix — and so is coming new cylinder and different ports. They come in three weeks ago, and they say to me, "OK, in Germany you have no problem now. Go to America, you have new bike now." I say, "Yeah?" He say, "Sure. You have new swingarm, everything. Good, very good. New tank, everything." "Maybe good," I say, "I don't know yet." Then I come here, say I must start (testing the new bike) very early. Say, "OK, no problem." But I can't come, don't get ticket, until Friday, and I say, "Oh, too late." And I come in and see that the bike is completely different.
DM: You didn't even get to ride the bike?
GR: One day, Saturday, two hours.
DM: The Saturday before the race you got to ride the bike?
GR: Yes. Then I ride bike and say, "Footrest is not good." They say, "Ah, nothing changed," and mechanic say I must ride this or nothing. I said the tank was broken. You know, maybe Roger used this one in Canada, but I have to use because no parts, you know. Is big tank, not necessary for small engine. Many problems. And new handlebars, too. Very light, very small. For lightness, everything light. And the feeling is not the same, position not the same. And I say no. For the first moto they give me Akira's new handlebars — no more (others) you know. And I cried. Then he put on new ones for second heat, but no good feeling.
DM: Well, you'll have time before Canada to sort everything out.
GR: My mechanic will change, he's up there now. But always difficult to change, no spare parts or front forks. He say to me, "I open, check everything and it's difficult." But we raise footrest one centimeter (0.49-inch).
DM: That much, huh? You probably couldn't get off the seat before. (laughter).
GR: Funny, huh? I ride and stay always in the seat. Always in the jump, I'm sitting (laughter). Same like that. And I say, "Goddamn!" Not possible to drive this!"
DM: How tall are you?
GR: 164cm (5'4½").
DM: How much do you weigh?

"There's Baborovsky and Churavy and they're Czechoslovakian people. It's impossible to ask these people. They say, OK, always OK. They have no idea what they're saying."

GR: 61 kilos (134 pounds). I have doctor, you know, same doctor as Eddie Metz (a Belgian bicycle star). In the winter I go to him and he say, "That's big here (points to stomach)!" Check everything and he say special regimen, must eat only special food. Very difficult. First month, three pounds! (laughter). I say, "I was ill, maybe not strong enough now." He say, "No, no problem." Very good now. My heart rate was 75, now 52. Very good.
DM: How did all this come about?
GR: You know, in January I come back from factory and say, OK, I must be world champion now. If I race 125, is not possible to finish in second position. So I ask Eddie Metz and he say, "OK, I know a good doctor and also special training room." So I go to that place and the doctor say, "OK, you must train on this." And Jim Pomeroy go to same place, training room. He go every time with me. Much better. Jim, first time come in he say, "No necessary this training," but first time working out Jim change color (laughter). He turned white! He stood beside me and say, "Oh, my God! Very tired!" Working for 40 minutes, two times you know. Like racing.
DM: So you spent the same amount of time in the training room as you would racing?
GR: Yes. And I have handlebar with seat — motorcycle position, you know — and 40 kilos (88 pounds) you're working with. Then you're working 30 kilos, then 20, then ten. Then you start again. It's very difficult!
DM: And Pomeroy couldn't handle it?
GR: First time, no, because you finish this and you go another place and work another one — five different ways. And Jim, he say, "Oh, (sigh) so difficult." Completely (makes sound effect for being tired), you know? Now, OK. He come in and no problem. That's very good.
JB: Dr. Noret (the doctor) is going to wire up Gaston when he gets back to Belgium. They'll check his heart rate, the changes, when he's out on the track. They want to find out what's going on while he's racing.
DM: What's his name again?
GR: Dr. Noret? You don't know him.
GL: I think Dick's planning on going there next week (laughter).
GR: He (Dr. Noret) fitted Eddie Metz with some special box, you know? And Metz drives and he sees what happens. Same with me. He say, "OK, now you go motocross race and put this on and drive two heats 45 minutes." Then he say, "OK, you have tired (yourself) in the start. Too nervous."
GL: That's been done before.
DM: Has Roger ever gone to him for testing? It would be interesting to see how he reacts. You ought to talk to him about it, have him go in and see what the difference is. Because Roger's in extremely good shape. I've never seen him in better shape than he's in now.
GR: The doctor, first he tested Metz. Now me, and now also one man, very fast sprint bicycle rider. Then maybe he try Roger, Watanabe.
DM: Have you ever talked to Roger about riding? Because he's got a special thing he does with breathing that no one else does.
GR: I talked many times with Roger about this, but . . .
DM: He doesn't tell anybody.
GR: No, nothing. Roger using many different things.
DM: Yeah, things that no one else does, and that's why he's so strong at the end of a moto.
GR: Yeah, I know. Roger is the first man training scientific like that. I ask Roger about that in Japan last year, and Roger say, "You must be world champion, huh? OK, no same as Joel," he say, "because if you stay same . . . Joel's finished. You must do hard training and everything."
DM: Do you think Joel can ever be champion again?
GR: No.
DM: He's too physically out of shape?

Cont'd. on page 62

Once DeCoster passed Wolsink, the Champion quickly vanished. Wolsink was superb. "I did all I could," said the dentist. When DeCoster has a hot hand, all anyone can do is second.

trans-ama

UNADILLA, NEW YORK

DeCoster shows his style on America's #1 motocross track

UNION CARBIDE

Story by Paul Boudreau

Photography by Paul Boudreau and Dick Miller

Rich Eierstedt sat in the big greenhouse front cab of the Honda truck, alone, and stared out at the light rain that was falling. It was 15 minutes before the first race, his race, the 250 Support race of the Unadilla Trans-AMA. Richard could handle every man in the race, and he knew it. His Honda RC250 is the holeshot machine. He knows the simple secret of winning: get the holeshot and pull away. That technique worked great for him two years ago when he and his RC ruled the Support Class. Two years later he's struggling to do the same thing. In that time he had worked himself up to where he was wheelieing away from DeCoster at last year's Livermore Trans-AMA, but this year, after nagging injuries afflicted his knees and wrist, he's back where he started. He sat alone, contemplating his holeshot.

Fifteen minutes later he was pitching the screaming RC into the wet grass of Unadilla Valley Sport Center's first turn, in the lead and on the gas. Using his cosmic style and flashing speed, he pulled away, guiding his sleek red-frame model over the twisting slopes of America's premier motocross track. But that was his finest moment. An endo, a blown clutch, a collision with an errant course marker and a deep gash in his right forearm ended a day of luck that was — for him — for the most part bad.

DeCoster, on the other hand, enjoyed one of his nicer days in this

Continued

COSTER
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UNADILLA, NEW YORK

country. This course was his the moment it was conceived. The rolling hill country northwest of New York's Catskills provides ideal terrain for the gnarly, difficult track so much to Roger's liking. Since the last Trans-AMA held here over a year ago, the track owners hadn't laid a finger (or a bulldozer) on it, allowing only the grass to grow. The rich, black loam and organic mulch of the Shenango River Valley provide ammunition for DeCoster's roost machine. He powers through the giant bumps on the uphills, throwing fans of black loam behind him — actually laughing. His bike, the DeCoster Special, built by Suzuki, called the RN370 and stud horse for the RM production bikes, gets the power down in grunts which take gulping bites of the terrain. Drenching rains the day before have made the low spots into tricky mudholes, challenging enough to interest him. This is what DeCoster lives for, and today he lives high.

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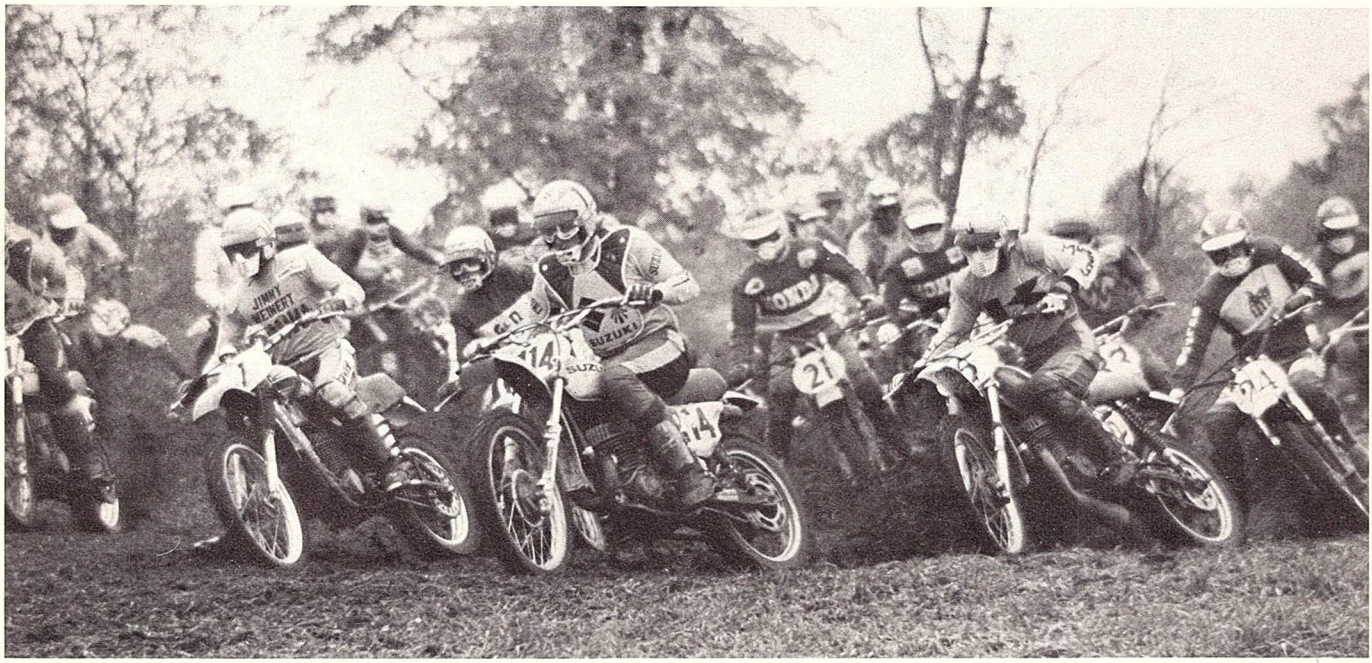
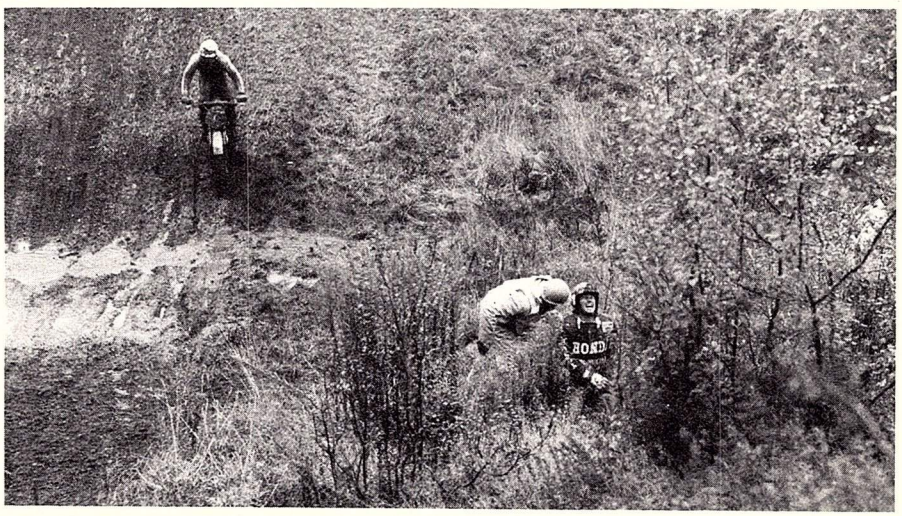


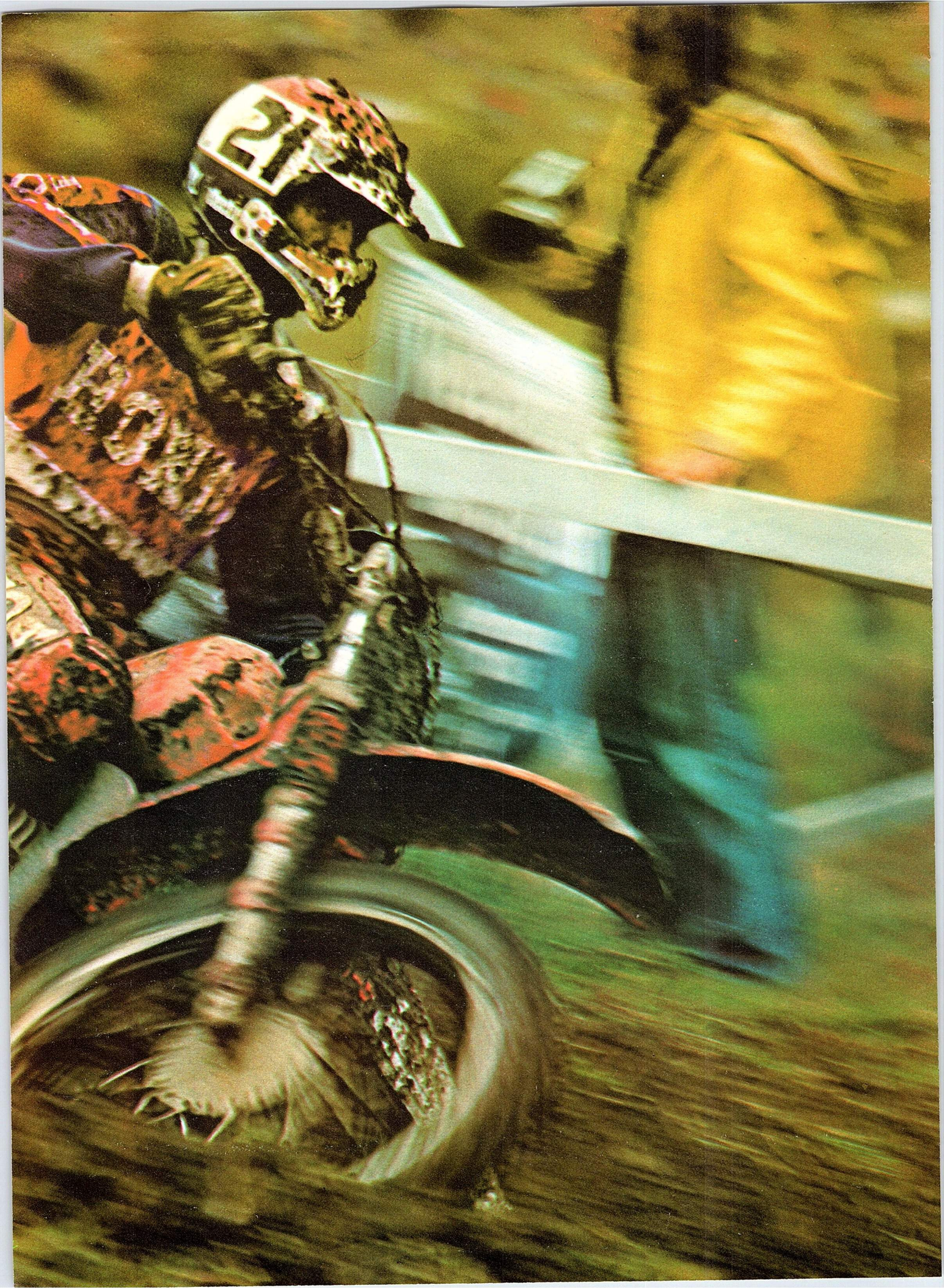
Start of the first International moto. Weinert (1) gets the holeshot, but he blew it after a couple of turns. Wolsink (114) took the lead from Jammin' Jimmy. DeCoster (111) on the inside was next with Semics (5) and Stackable behind.

Remarked Weinert (1) to DeCoster (111), "Roger, you're so bad you need *three* ones."

The Big Green was definitely on the gas in practice and early in the first moto, till a broken gearbox ended the show.



In the Support race, Rich Eierstedt showed some of his old stuff, until an errant course marker sent him over the bars down Unadilla's notorious "Screw-U."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Greggs + Chuck - sleep wagon.
Dennis - Truck
Tent - Rest of them.

Chuck - Babb
Greggs
Dunham
Boot
Flimsy

Coleman lantern
Coleman stove
Flourescent.
Tent - Tarps.
Folding chair
pipe table - $5.
Ice chest
sleeping bag

Tent + Tarps.

Dennis - Wickberg
Haigh

Greggs bike
Blacks Bike
Flimsys Bike

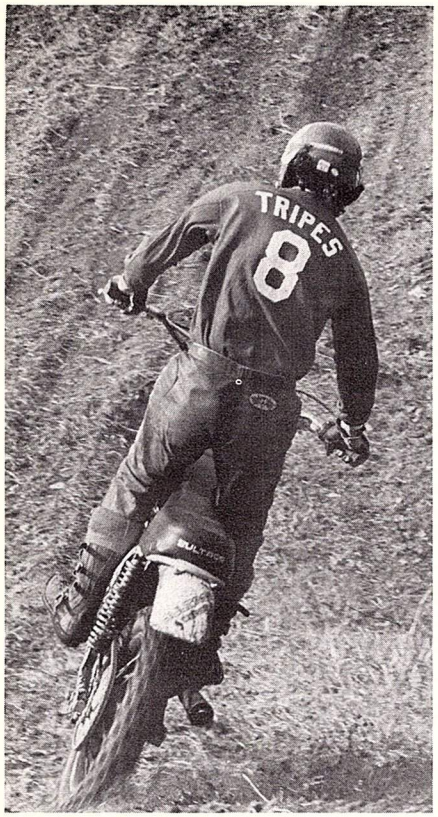
Extra

Martin
Gremlin
Houghlin
Lashega
Diamore.
~~Badka~~
Fathead.

Possibility

W. Beaherson - chevy Van.
S. Kozal chevy pickups.

UNADILLA, NEW YORK



Ol' Slim, showing definite signs of weight loss in his baggy Torsten Hallmans, fought briefly with Karsmakers and Smith in the second moto before his stand-up style drove a peg through his boot.

Ellis won the final Support moto but couldn't get his rhythm together in the first.

Wolsink was superb, too. He rode with great speed and control, scoring two second-place finishes behind the master. His strength and ability would have brought him a victory on any other day of the year, save this one. "I did all that I could. I was not able to see very well, because I could not wear my contact lenses because of the mud. I could not see the ruts in the track, and I had to go around by memory," smiled the gentle dentist after it was over. It was Wolsink who held the lead in both motos while DeCoster prepared his lines in second.

Brad Lackey ran a strong and consistent third to the Suzuki duo, at one time challenging Wolsink for second. In his pursuit of the dentist, Lackey passed under one of the wild fruit trees that mark the downhill off-cambers and got an apple in the eye. "It must've been dangling right there, 'cause it caught me right in the face. I was seeing fuzzy for a few turns after that."

Jim Pomeroy was held back by a

Continued

Howerton got by Weinert on the last lap of the last moto with superior berm work.

UNADILLA, NEW YORK

Tony DiStefano holeshot the second moto and spent the rest of the heat challenging Lackey's position.

Determination and one mighty fast Husky 250 put it all together for Terry Clark in the Support class. Winning *anything* at Unadilla is a major accomplishment and Terry had a lot to feel good about.

Lackey asserted his place in the competition by finishing an excellent third to the Dynamic Duo. He creeps up on a lapper.

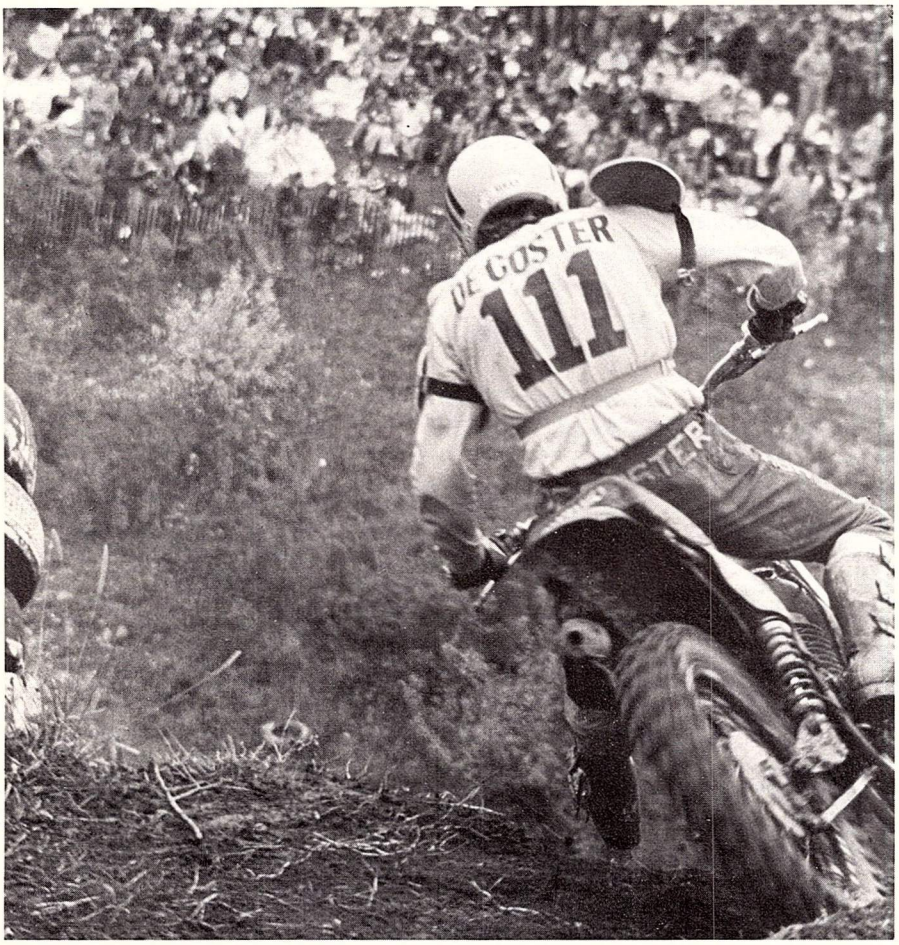
John Savitski made an incredible run in the second Support moto, from dead last off the line to second behind Ellis. He was on the verge of extinction all the way.

broken shock absorber in the first moto, and a broken master link in the second. He resumed the race after installing a new link, but retired from the moto after receiving mechanical assistance in the wrong place.

Steve Stackable rode beautifully in both motos. He was the only rider to find the clean outside line up the next to last hill, wide-open in fourth and crossed up all the way from bottom to top. "It's a right, and I like rights," said Stack. If they had right-hand shorttrack, Stackable would be champion. His fine performance was hexed, however, by a fouled plug while running fifth in the first moto. The rules say the rider must push his bike in by himself to receive assistance. So Bernie Thompson, Steve's mechanic, waited helplessly at the top of the incredibly steep hill to the mechanics' area while the Texan struggled with his heavy Maico at the bottom.

DeCoster, the master, was the only rider to work up a comfortable rhythm on the rough Unadilla track. Two wins show the results.

A parted master link ended the Jones-Islo effort for a while. From left to right: Gary Jones (seated) and Don Jones (standing).



Despite the ducky weather, a big crowd came to watch DeCoster do his tricks.

Ohio winner Jim Weinert did a spectacular loop-out in practice, and never managed to get a rhythm going on the bumpy course. Gary Jones and the Jones Islo suffered their third breakdown in as many weeks — this time a parted master link.

Cont'd on page 68

UNADILLA, NEW YORK

RESULTS
500 INTERNATIONAL

1) Roger DeCoster (1-1) ..... Suzuki
2) Gerrit Wolsink (2-2) ..... Suzuki
3) Brad Lackey (3-3) ..... Husqvarna
4) Tony DiStefano (5-4) ..... Suzuki
5) Kent Howerton (6-6) ..... Husqvarna
6) Jim Weinert (7-7) ..... Yamaha
7) Pierre Karsmakers (9-9) ..... Honda
8) Bob Harris (8-11) ..... CZ
9) Jim West (10-12) ..... Maico
10) Marty Smith (15-10) ..... Honda
11) Charles Sun (11-15) ..... Husqvarna
12) Gaylon Mosier (14-13) ..... Maico
13) Mark Blackwell (13-14) ..... Husqvarna
14) Stewart Anderson (16-17) ..... Bultaco
15) Joe Gretchen (17-18) ..... Maico
16) Patrick Moroney (18-20) ..... Husqvarna
17) Gilbert DeRoover (12-27) ..... CZ
18) James Both (22-19) ..... Husqvarna
19) Michael Robinson (27-16) ..... Suzuki
20) Gregory Theiss (21-23) ..... Suzuki

250 SUPPORT

1) Terry Clark (1-3) ..... Husqvarna
2) Mickey Kessler (2-4) ..... Husqvarna
3) Jim Ellis (6-1) ..... Can-Am
4) John Savitski (7-2) ..... Bultaco
5) Tommy Croft (4-6) ..... Honda
6) Buck Murphy (9-5) ..... Can-Am
7) Wayne Boyer (12-8) ..... CZ
8) John Gurga (15-7) ..... Ossa
9) John Ayers (13-9) ..... Maico
10) Randy Sargent (17-10) ..... Suzuki

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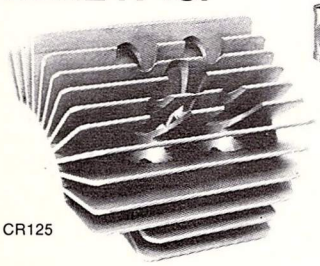
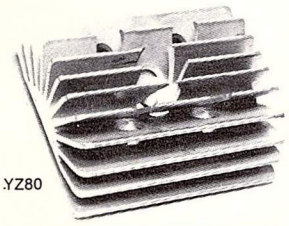


CR125

DG's 1976 model 17-fin Radial Head

A totally new design concept: new combustion chamber provides more horsepower instantly. Dyno-testing shows the 17-fin design reduces head and exhaust temperatures by as much as 100 degrees. New manufacturing method keeps price low. Available now for CR125 ....**$39.95**

and a new 13-fin model for YZ80 **$34.95**



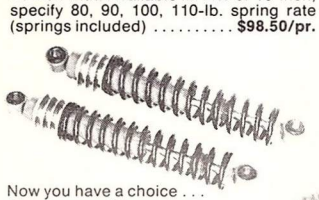
YZ80

NEW! NEW! NEW! NEW
Radial Head for YZC Mono and Suzuki RM125 $39.95

Now available from DG

The Gas Girling Shock

What makes the Gas Girling so great? Just ask Heikki Mikkola—they're the ones he won with. Available in 11.8 or 13-inch; specify 80, 90, 100, 110-lb. spring rate (springs included) ..... **$98.50/pr.**



Now you have a choice . . . Aluminum or Chromoly.

DG ALUMINUM SWING ARMS

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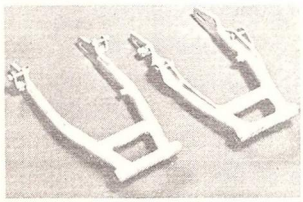
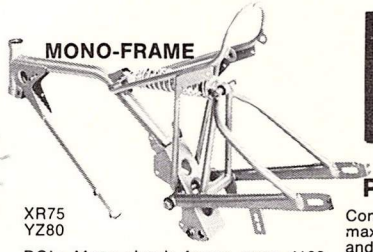
LAY-DOWN FORWARD-MOUNT





XR75
YZ80

DG's Mono-shock frame uses 4130 chromoly with gold-anodized cadmium plating. Heliarc welded for max. strength. Won't scratch, chip or peel. Stock components fit.

Frame only
XR75 ..... **$295.00**
YZ80 ..... **$325.00**
with Gas Bilstein shock
XR **$349.00**
YZ **$379.00**

SOON AVAILABLE
CR MONO-FRAME

125YZC (Mono) PIPE

Dave Williams won the Mammoth Mountain Motocross with this pipe **$48.95**

Suzuki RM125 Pipe $48.95

Available from DG

The New Inter-Am Solid-Stock Aluminum Handlebars AMA-approved

The super-light, super-strong, SUPER BAR by Inter-Am. Made from #2024 solid-stock anodized aluminum, with almost twice the bending resistance of chromoloy and almost 4 times that of mild steel. And, no more cross bar to loosen your teeth. Available in beautiful anodized Silver, Gold, or Black . .**$14.95**

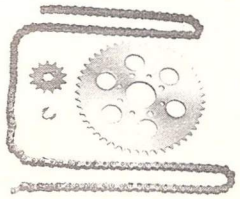
We also have the **Marzocchi Gas Shock** in all popular links and valving. **$99.50** complete.

FORK BOOTS $8.95/pr.

High quality rubber; accordian design. Protect front fork works. Black, also in red, yellow, or blue.

Sprocket Kit with Chain

Eliminate chain problems on your CR125. Uses 520 chain. Countershaft drilled and tapped. Horseshoe-clip included. Rear teeth: 48, 49, 50 or 51. Front teeth: 12, 13 or 14. ..... $42.95



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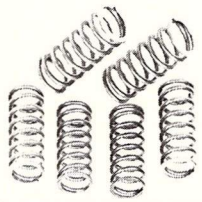
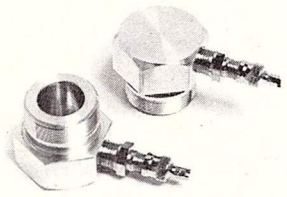
For CR125. Adds to clutch life, stops power loss due to slippage.
Set of 6 ..... **$6.95**



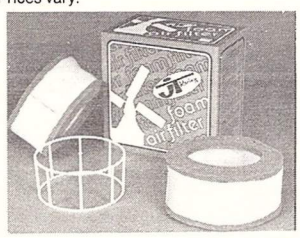
GAS YOUR FORKS!

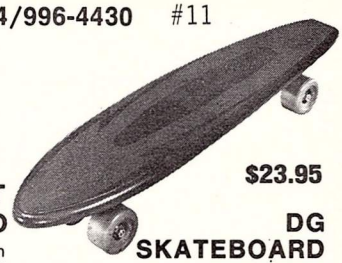
Adaptor for charging front fork with air for extra cushion. Lets you remove fork springs and run with a straight air/oil suspension. Yamaha, Suzuki, and Honda (others soon) .....**$15.95/pr.**



JT Racing "Phase II" FOAM AIR FILTER

Available for most models of racing bikes. Prices vary.





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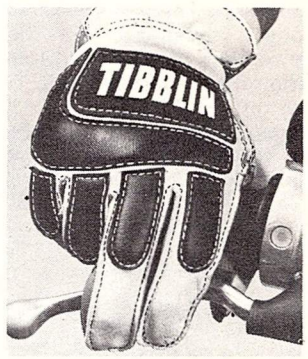
DG SKATEBOARD

Manufactured from unbreakable urethane with anti-slip surface. Has that just-right flex and an extra wide tail for better footing. The trucks are specifically designed for skate boards. Urethane board has 100% guarantee against breakage. Available in red, yellow or blue.

DG is proud to offer

TIBBLIN GLOVES

Superior quality. Manufacturer guarantees materials and workmanship for 3 months. 100% lambskin, fully padded. S, M, L, XL. ..... **$28.85/pr.**

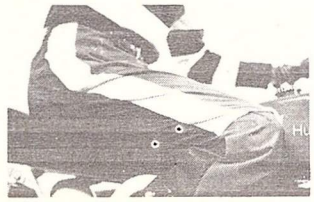


Finn Fighter "707"

FACE MASK

Developed by JT Racing, Heikki Mikkola, and KOHO of Finland, new design features venting to provide more "breathable" air and cooler circulation of air; adjustable to wear close in, far out, tilted; shatterproof, bends but doesn't break. Streamlined look in red, white and blue Mikkola colors **$8.95**

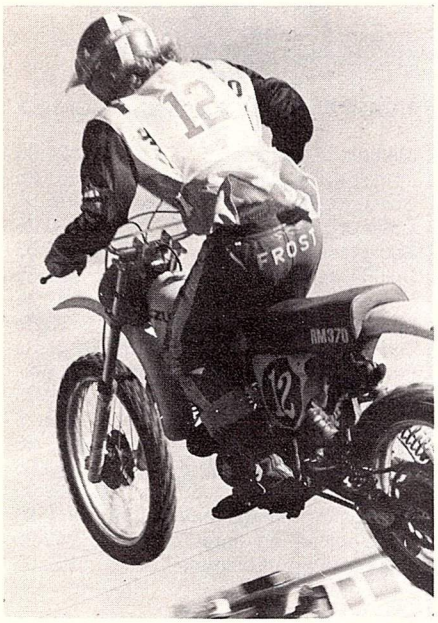
MIKKOLA "UNLEATHERS" by KOHO AMA-approved



These are the new GP pants that the Moto-X world is raving about. Made of nylon and goat skin, they combine the best features of both. Lightweight . . . cool . . . water-repellent . . . durable. Ideal for desert or back east hot, humid summer riding. Goat skin in crotch and inner knee helps you keep a grip on your machine. Available in Mikkola red, white and blue; Team Yamaha white-yellow and black; Team Husky blue with yellow strip: Team Maico red-black and yellow . . .$110.95

DEALER INQUIRY INVITED

Cont'd. from page 29



Ken Frost of La Mesa, California, pushes his new Suzuki to fourth overall.

Champion) Gene McCay of Lexington, Tennessee, was piloting his Noguchi Yamaha to second, fifth and second-place finishes. John Tessitore of Bonita, California, compiled a 5-4-3 record for third overall aboard a South Bay Motorcycles Yamaha.

250 CLASS

The first 250 moto developed into a seesaw battle between Mike McGowen (Suz) of Spring Valley, California, and Jeff Heaston of Fort Wayne, Indiana. McGowen eventually took the lead for good on the seventh lap and held on to win. He also won the second moto and finished third in the last, good enough for the overall win and the prize Can-Am. Heaston finished second to McGowen again in the second moto, but a fifth in the third moto dropped him to third overall behind Ed Moor of Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey. Blaine Elledge of Woodinville, Washington, pushed his Can-Am to the win in the final moto, after poor finishes in the first two rounds, to finish sixth overall.

OPEN CLASS

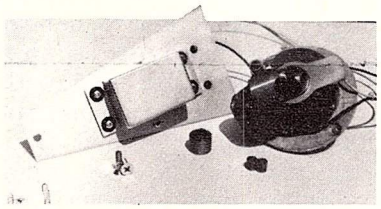
Fifteen-year-old high school student Kenneth Adams of West Grove, Pennsylvania, completely dominated the Open Class. Grabbing early leads in each moto, Adams turned in a three-moto sweep of the class aboard his Ritchie's Cycle Repair CZ. Jeff Prevost of Perry Hall, Maryland, was just as consistent, pushing his Noel Hall/ Quaker State-sponsored Maico to three seconds and second overall. Chuck Pettigrew of Lucerne Valley, California, rode another Maico to an easy third.

The AMA has already confirmed that there will be another National Amateur Motocross Championship in 1976. Interested riders are urged to contact their regions, or to get in touch with the AMA directly at P.O. Box 141, Westerville, Ohio 43081.

SUPER CDI SYSTEM

for XR-75s, YZ-80s, MR-50s & CR-125s

JUST $175



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Speed'n Sport CDI systems are shipped complete with coil, spark plug cover, mounting hardware and full instructions.

J&H RACING EQUIPMENT

Rush your CDI system. Check or Money order for $175.00 enclosed.
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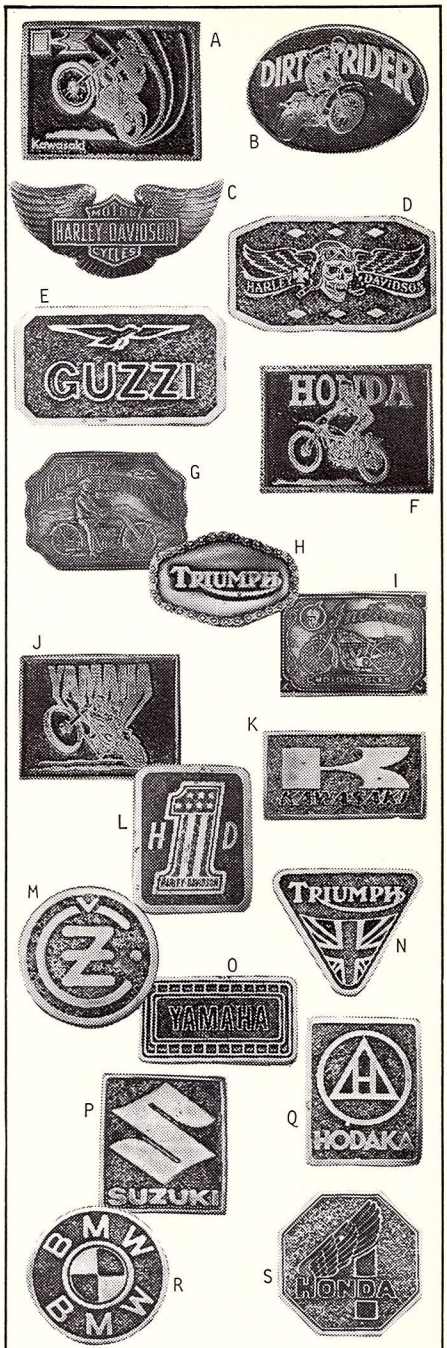

Pewter Buckles (with solid brass hooks to insure maximum durability and guaranteed not to break off). Curved to fit the contour of your waist.

Any Pewter Buckle $4.00
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Specify Either Antique Solid Pewter (Silver) or Antique Brass Finish (Gold)

Genuine leather belts (black or brown) **$5.00**
1¾" width, oil tanned & waxed (sizes 26-46)

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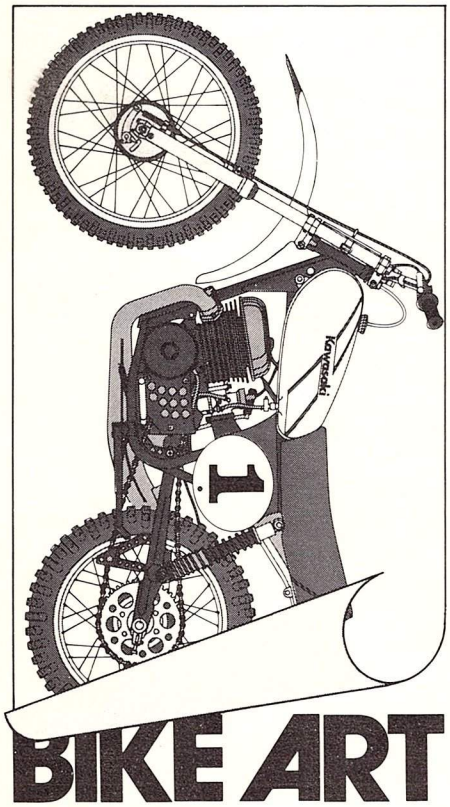

BIKE ART

NEW FROM BIKE ART

These big, full-color 25" x 38" lithographs of the Kawasaki Z-1 and KX400 are beautifully detailed and ready for hanging or framing. Send $3.00 plus $.50 handling for each poster to "Bike Art," P.O. Box 25922, Los Angeles, California 90025. California residents add $.18 sales tax. Watch for more dirt and street bikes in this series. MX-2

SHOT-PEENING

Cont'd from page 25

side advantage was that when you shot-peen gears, the "peened" surface of the gear teeth acts as a multitude of tiny reservoirs for oil, helping to give better lubrication and tending to eliminate fretting and scoring. Shot-peening a connecting rod will give the rod a rough surface, but a compressed rough surface will resist fatigue better than a smooth surface under tension. It's a waste of time and money to polish a rod when it can be shot-peened with superior results.

There's something else to consider, too. When you're building a race bike and installing new parts, you should realize that just because a part is new doesn't mean that it's good. We have shown you in the past that gears, etc., bought right off the dealer's shelf can have cracks and fractures due to defects in machining and forming.

It is important that if you have a part like a gearbox shot-peened, you make sure that is the last process the piece will undergo. I had the CR125's gears undercut by Jack Davis, the man who does conversions for Cycle Products West. With the gears undercut, there is no way for the gear to disengage under load, and the gears have the tendency to pull together when shifted. After cutting the gears, the gearbox was magnafluxed by Jim Meyer, and *then* he shot-peened the whole thing at one of his shops, Tri-Process Co.

Desmond Moloney of Tri-Process mentioned to us that he is beginning to see more motorcycle parts go through his shop lately, but that they've been mostly street high-performance items. He also said that the most common misconception about shot-peening is that people believe that the process relieves stress, rather than instilling higher stress levels, as it does. It is this stress which is responsible for the additional strength gained through shot-peening.

If you're interested in shot-peening for your bike, contact: Jim Meyer and Associates, 8128 Stewart & Gray Road, Downey, California 90241; (213) 869-5117. If you'd like your gears undercut, contact: Cycle Products West, 11900 Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, California 90025; (213) 477-0997.

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"NEW YEAR TRICKS FROM COMP-X"

Mikkola MX gloves	$24.95
Jofa shoulder pads	$31.95
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Scott face guards	$5.95
Bell RT helmets (red or blue)	$33.95
Hallman MX peaks (r, bl, wt, yel)	$2.75
Mikkola 707 rock guards	$6.95
"NEW" Norstar/Munari Nylon MX pants (knee cups, leather inseam, lined, super-light, cool and trick)	$69.95
Norstar or Munari boots	$59.95
American Pro MX socks (r or yel)	$2.95
Boge Shocks (incl. springs)	$49.95
Girling gas shocks	$59.95
Springs for Girlings (any weight)	$12.95
Boge gas-spring units	$49.95
Bell Moto Sport helmets	$55.95

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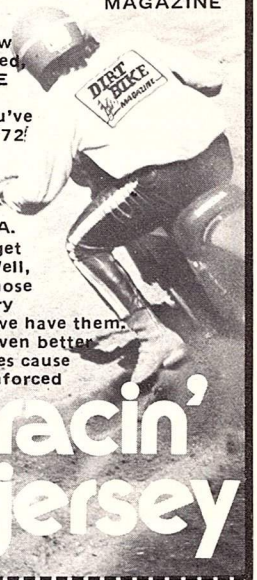
DIRT BIKE MAGAZINE



Okay, you all know that a bright colored, vented DIRT BIKE racing jersey is a desirable unit. You've seen Ake win the '72 Trans-AMA one. You've seen John DeSoto wearing one in the '73 Trans-AMA. But you couldn't get one, could you? Well, nobody could. Those were special factory prototypes. Now we have them. Regular replicas, even better than the prototypes cause these have the reinforced elbows and the DIRT BIKE logo on both sides. Get your DIRT BIKE Racin' Jersey now, while they last.

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$14.95 + 50¢ postage and handling. Please send me____Racin' Jersey (s) S M L XL
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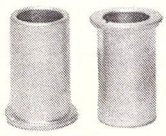
Heavy Duty Bronze Swingarm Bushings

These replacement swingarm bushings are precision machined from solid bronze to insure a snug fit between swingarm and bolt. Resists wear and maintains wheel alignment for improved handling. Available for

Honda CR 125	$10.95
Honda CR 250	$11.95



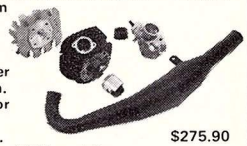
Porcupine Cylinder Head

Unique design provides 18% more heat radiating surface area than stock cylinder head but with less weight. FMF Porcupine head keeps power loss due to heat build-up to a minimum. Hi-compression FMF combustion chamber increases engine performance. Bolts on stock or modified engines.

Available for Honda CR 125 $56.95

Marty Smith Engine Kit

For 1973-1975 CR 125 Hondas, this engine kit produces up to 30% more H.P. Your stock '73 or '74 cylinder will be ported and a boost port added. Your piston will be precision machined to match the new boost port. FMF completes the kit with a Porcupine cylinder head, 32mm Mikuni carb and manifold, and competition pipe tuned to match the cylinder porting. Kit bolts on. Call or write FMF for your machine shop service appointment.



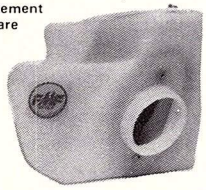
$275.90

Now available for the 1976 model.

CR125 Air Box Assembly

Large capacity, water resistant, air box bolts on in minutes.
Air box comes complete with a double layer reuseable foam air filter element and all mounting hardware for bolt-on installation.

$39.95



100cc Sleeve Down Kit for 125cc CR

All the advantages of a smooth handling 125cc chassis can now be used in the 100cc class and comes complete with aluminum piston, special rings, cast iron cylinder sleeve and FMF hi-compression Porcupine head with gasket.
Honda CR cylinder may be boost ported for additional performance. Specify when ordering. Honda cylinder, boost porting or standard porting. Call or write FMF for your machine shop service appointment.

Sleeve Down Kit CR 125 Std. porting	$240.98
Sleeve Down Kit CR 125 Boost porting	$285.98

Air-Oil Suspension Conversion

Special sealed fork caps allow front forks to be filled with air without removing handlebars. Available for

74 CR 125	$14.95
75 CR 125	$ 9.95
74 CR 250	$15.95
75 CR 250	$ 9.95

FMF Expansion Chambers

Exclusively designed and tested by Flying Machine Factory, expansion chambers are tuned to produce usable horsepower over a broad RPM range.
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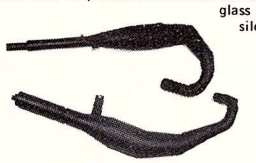

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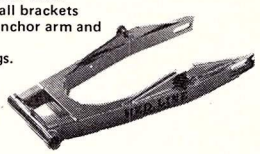

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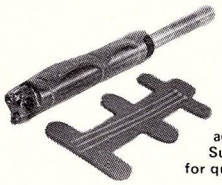

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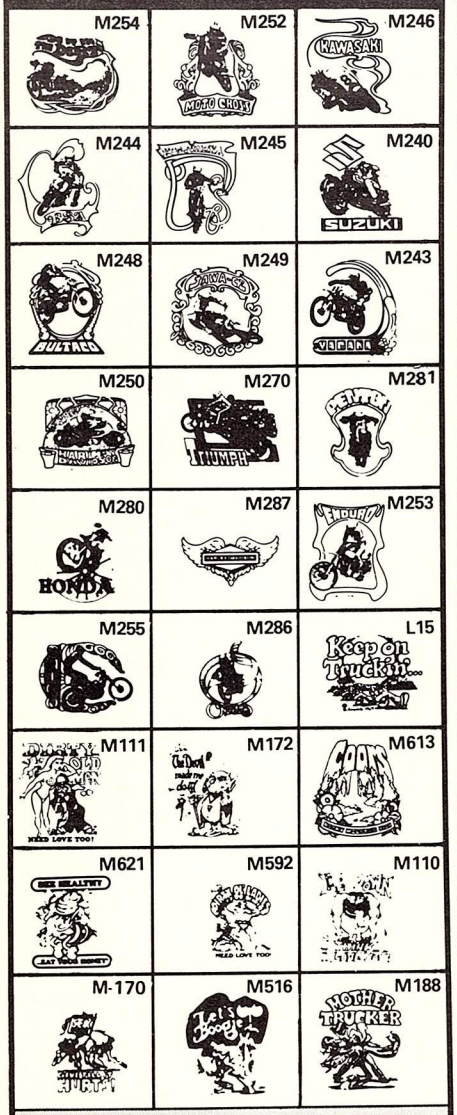

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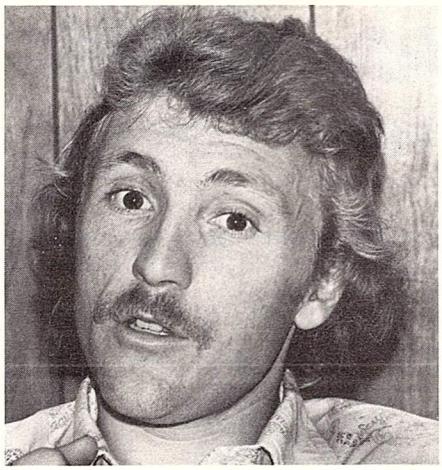
GASTON RAHIER

Cont'd. from page 49



GR: Joel is a very good man. I think if he trains, it's possible.

DM: He won't train?

GR: He's not hungry anymore.

CH: Is it possible anymore for a very talented rider like Joel to win without training? Or has it changed?

DM: I think it's changed. Like the difference in Joel's last two or three world championships was that he had a motorcycle that nobody could beat. The motorcycle was extremely good, better than anything there. He had to ride, but he didn't have to exert himself.

GR: Yes. Last year (1974) Roger was down a bit because he did not do too much training. Drink beer, not too much training.

DM: And his bike wasn't as fast, either.

GR: Nothing, you know. Roger now very good. Joel was completely different, because you say to Joel, "You must be in training." He says, "Sure, sure." (laughter). I go with him in January ('74) to Japan to test, and he say, "I no drink now. Finish." After two days, "I stop today, no more." Then I stop at Joel's and he have two girls, striptease girls who go to Japan, French girls. They're drinking champagne. And Joel . . . (he whistles) (laughter). He say, "Relax, huh?" I say, "You drinking?" He say, "No, no, no, no more. I finish." Then he say, "One last, no more. No beer, nothing." Good, Joel! And he training every day at the company, every day ride, and he goes very fast. Last two days, very very *fast. Getting more and more fast always. Company say, "Joel may be good." He take maybe five kilos (11 pounds) off in one month training. Very good then. So they say go to dinner, and we do. For good work. And at dinner, Joel, one beer, two beer, three beer, 20 beers. That's bad!*

CH: Oh, Joel and I would get along great.

GR: Then he forget completely, huh? And he working one month for nothing. I don't understand this man. If you were taking Joel with you, same like you have one child.

CH: Like Gunnar said, the hunger, it's the hunger. You need to be hungry in order to train yourself.

DM: Well, in your class, who's your competition? If you were on equal bikes in the 125, who would be your stiffest competition?

GR: I think DeRoover and Baborovsky and Churavy. I think if you watch the races you see that every rider good for 30 minutes, these anyway. And me, same. Then after 30 minutes . . .

DM: Do you get good starts?

GR: In the first GP, I start first and win. Then in second moto I start first and in first corner Malherbe, no brakes, centerpunches me and everybody go. In second GP, same thing. Crash (laughter).

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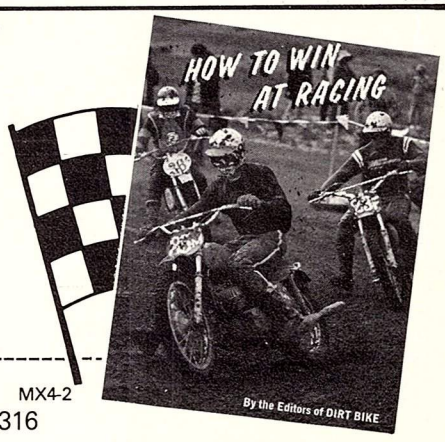

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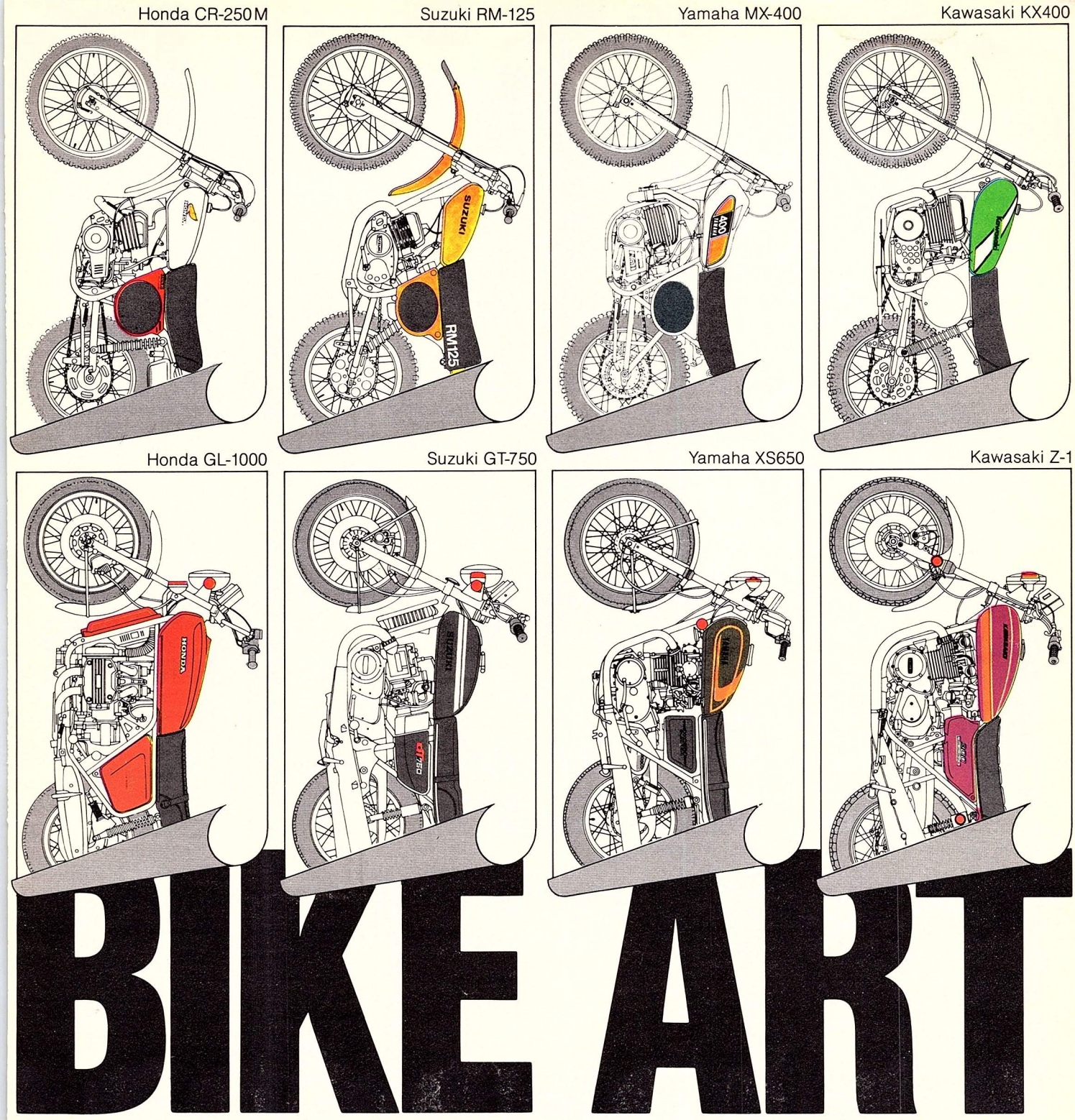

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GASTON RAHIER

Continued

DM: Why did that happen?
GR: I don't know. He (Malherbe) always say, "I don't know. Sorry, sorry!" (laughter). He always go too fast! (laughter). Because he is thinking, he was champion before and he is good. So he say, "I must go on winning!" And he go! Zundapp, you know, always winning before, and put much pressure on him. Give him new bike, more power.
DM: Their bike was very powerful before.
GR: Yeah, now I think their bike has more power than mine. Stronger. You know, my bike maybe more top speed, but bottom for Zundapp very strong now.
DM: But they have a very special engine.
GR: Yeah, Zundapp only factory bikes. DeRoover bring here two bikes and five engines because very easily broken.
DM: Yeah, they must be pretty highly tuned.
GR: Yes, and the gearbox (breaks) also.
DM: Do they run a six-speed?
GR: No, a five. Very strong engine, you know, same as 250. They use 4.50 tires. We use 4.00.
DM: Can't you run a 4.50?
GR: Yes, but lose power. It's not necessary. And then when Zundapp use 4.50, very heavy always. 192 pounds.
DM: Well, in Ohio you never really got a chance to battle with Marty Smith.
GR: No, that's the problem!
DM: He's a good rider. Excellent!
GR: I see him practicing. He's a good rider, huh? Very fast.
DM: But not so good in the mud. He's not familiar with it.
GR: I know. It's impossible for him to be good in mud, because he not have enough experience. I see his technique, the driving is not good for mud. He use the same line as everybody, and that's bad, impossible, in the mud. He's driving very special. Coming to the corner (makes ringing noise), always touch clutch, using clutch. That's no good for mud. Not smooth. But he's a very young rider.
DM: That means he has a lot of time to grow.
GR: How old is he, 18?
DM: Yeah, he just graduated from high school. And he can ride different ways. I mean, he rides a 250 differently than he does a 125. He started on a 125, and he's very, very fast.
GR: Yes, I think . . .
DM: The Honda is very high-powered too, like your bike.
GR: Yes, difficult for riding.
DM: Difficult to ride, and there's no one around here who can stay with him (on a 125). He's that fast.
GR: Much faster than anyone. But if he stays in the U.S. he'll stay the same. It's impossible for him to be world champion unless he spends two or three years in Europe for experience on the courses, because it's completely different, you know?
GL: But here we have the American championships, and they run on the east coast too. And many times they have mud, and different tracks. So he's learning. And, you know, there are many, many guys here that can be good in a few years. They're learning.
DM: Are the 125s running the same courses the 250s and 500s do in Europe?
GR: Yes, the same.
DM: Let's talk about that. How do the lap times compare?
GR: In Holland I go (lap times) four seconds faster than Gerrit Wolsink when he won the 250 International class. And they had Willi Bauer, Pomeroy, Lackey — everybody. Then, it was a hard course, hard racing, and I go four second better.
DM: But that's a running lap.
GR: Yes.
DM: So where the 125s lose it is at the start?
GR: Yes. In Japan in training Joel put pressure on me and I go more fast than Joel always.
DM: And you're on a 125 and he's on a 250?

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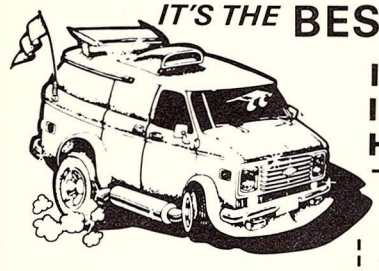

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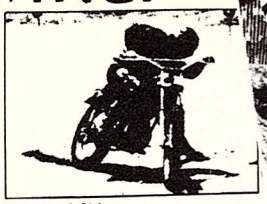
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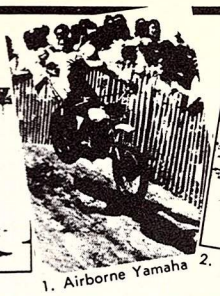
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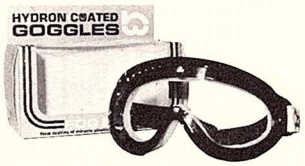

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GASTON RAHIER

Continued

GR: Yes, and always two or three seconds faster.

DM: What did he say?

GR: Then he go back to Belgium and say, "No problem. Gaston is world champion. Bike is too fast!" (laughter).

DM: But you'd lose out at the start against a bigger bike.

GR: And in the turn, acceleration. But the lap time is faster.

GL: You know what that proves, really? It proves how little power means and how much weight means — in handling, you know. You can jump faster and land harder with a little bike and no problems.

GR: Yes, much better 125! Jump farther, brake later. And you feel like you no crash. Less weight is important. You know, when Joel winning all 250, his bike was maybe 20 kilos (44 pounds), lighter than other bikes.

DM: Have you guys tried any other transmissions, like three-speeds?

GR: No, not at Suzuki, no. Only four- and five-speeds.

DM: Did you try a six-speed 125?

GR: I tried one, one time.

DM: No good?

GR: Too much shifting.

DM: Are they sending Marty to the GP in Canada?

CH: No, there's a National in Omaha, Nebraska.

GR: I say to Marty, you must come to Canada, because very bad. Just one time race and nothing resolved.

DM: Well, it won't be so good for you in Canada, not having Marty there. No second chance.

GR: Not so good for Marty in Canada, maybe. Better track.

DM: Yeah, it's not so good for you to be beat by him without really having a chance to race him. I mean, obviously, I think you're the better rider. You've got the experience.

GR: That's the problem. Like everybody say to me last week (in Ohio), "Why don't you take it easy? It's good, you're Champion. Five position is OK." And I say, "If I ride and finish fifth and Marty win, everybody say that's the World Champion and he's a very slow man!"

DM: Yeah, that's a problem. World Champions can't go out and play.

GL: No. You can't go out and practice slow because now anywhere you go some guy is going to come along beside you and whip his throttle, and then if you don't race him and beat him he's going to say, "I beat Gaston . . . ."

GR: Yes, that is the problem now.

DM: Gastòn, we appreciate your coming. Congratulations on your Championship, you deserve it.

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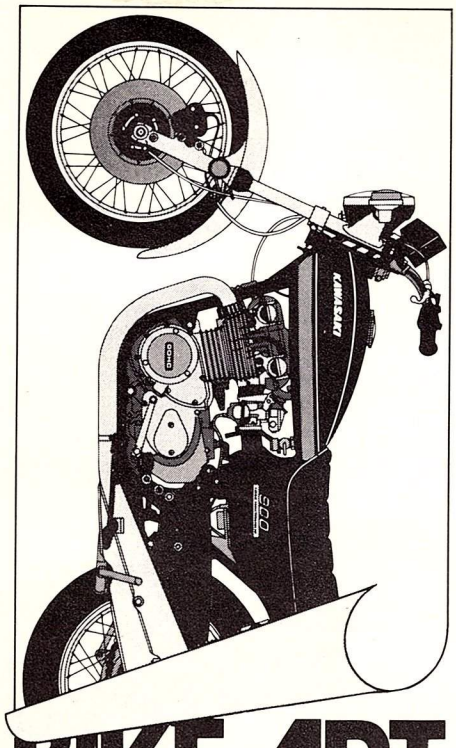

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UNADILLA

Cont'd from page 57

"Y'all get that bike up this hill so's I kin fix it," shouted Bernie. Stackable was in tears.

Gary Semics, the easy-talking farm boy from Ohio, was on the gas. He had burned his KX400 Kawasaki around in Saturday practice like a possessed man. Big Green was on the move again Sunday, as Semics shared the early laps of the first moto with DeCoster, Wolsink and Stackable. But a broken third gear stopped his plan before it had a serious chance to develop.

Stackable had it all going for him until bad luck, which seems to be riding with him lately, fouled his plug at the bottom of a big hill.

Marty Tripes stayed standing around the whole course, and worked a Bultaco footpeg right through the sole of his boot in the first moto. "I was riding barefoot for a while!" said Porky. He was forced to retire, but not before he bent the hefty pegs back considerably. Incredible.

The Honda team of Pierre Karsmakers and Marty Smith had its share of problems. Karsmakers spent a lot of time refitting a derailed chain and shaking off a flip over the top of "Screw-U," while Smith just never got with the program. But both riders ended up sharing an excellent dice in the last moto, taking lighthearted shots at each other with their big-bore Hondas.

Becoming almost invisible in the glare of the victories of some and the shadows of defeat of others were the spectacular performances of Tony DiStefano and Kent Howerton. DiStefano cruised past the pack and was searching out Stackable when the first moto ended. He came back in the second moto with a holeshot, quickly lost the lead to Wolsink, and eventually gave way to the relentless pursuit of DeCoster and Lackey.

Continued

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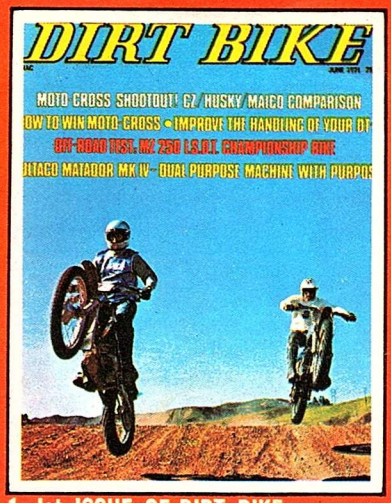
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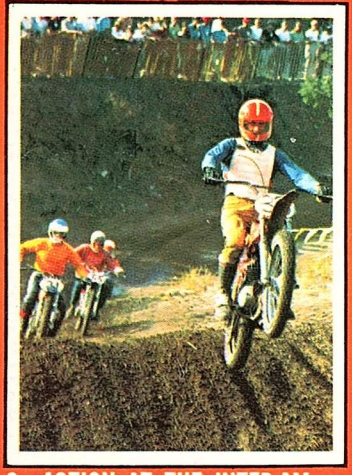

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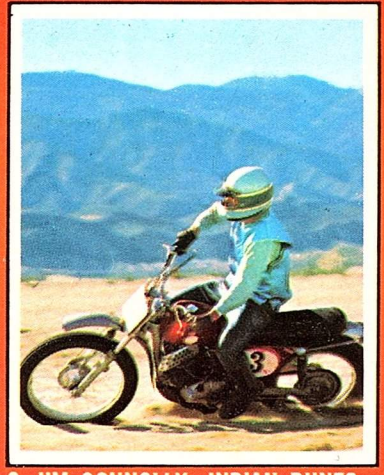

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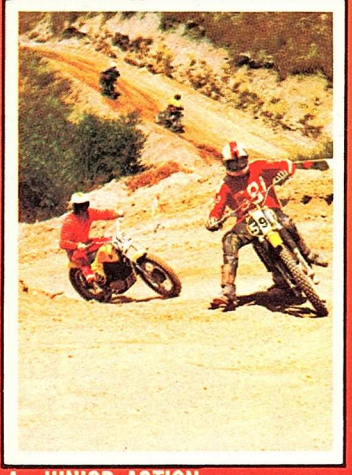

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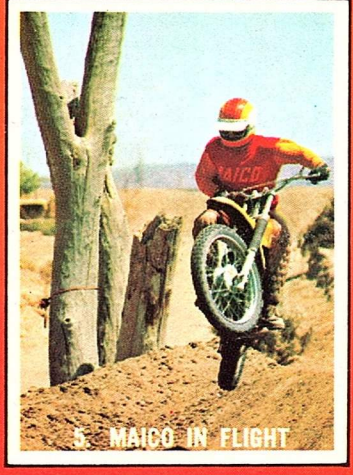

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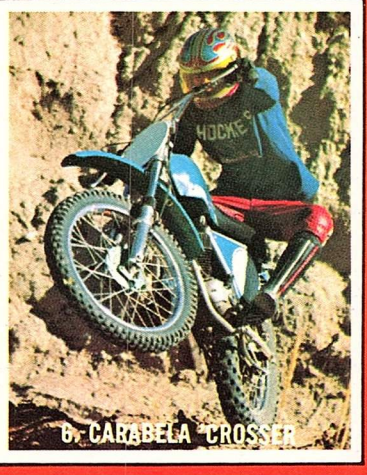

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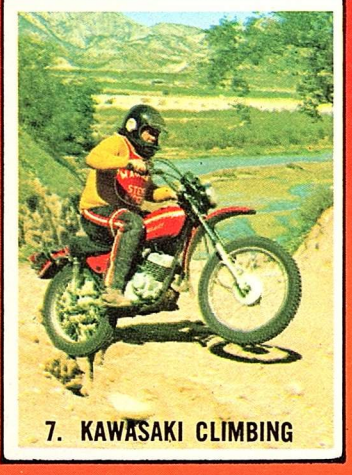

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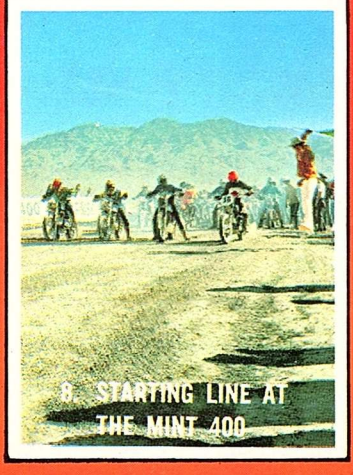

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Howerton was loose. All day long he thoroughly enjoyed himself on the sloping Unadilla course. On the final lap of the day he drew up to challenge Weinert, just as he had the week earlier. On a long, slick berm, slotted only to accept the wheels of one bike, Howerton engaged the National Champion and dispatched him over the top, reversing their final scores on the board.

For the thousands of dyed-in-the-wool motocross fans who would spend a cold, drizzly day slogging through the wet grass and mud of Unadilla after partying all night in the hundreds of vans camped on the hillside in the pouring rain, all just to see DeCoster at work, the $10 price of admission was money well spent. The master did his trick.

A broken master link, a problem that plagued many riders that day, ended Jim Pomeroy's chance to put points on DeCoster.

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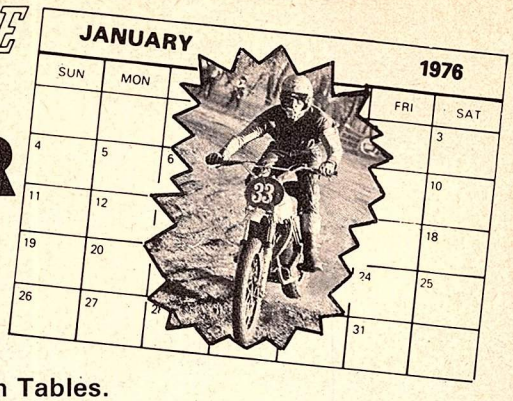

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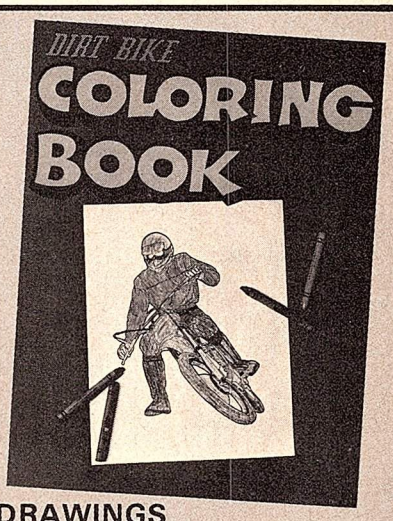

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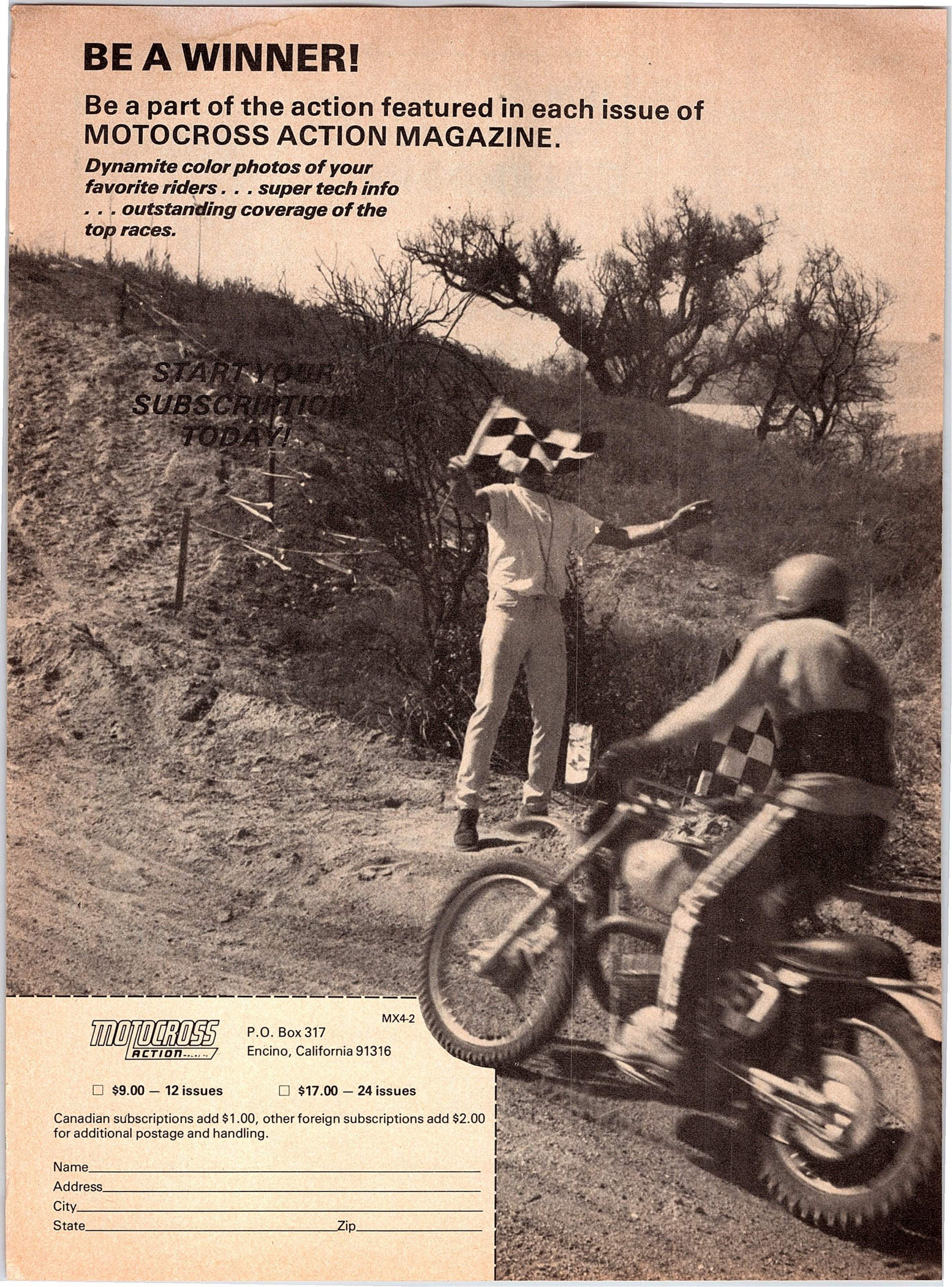

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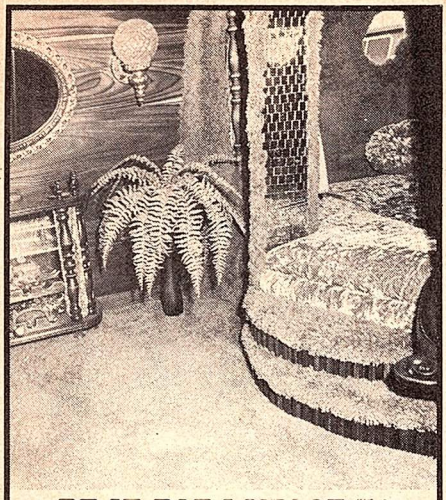

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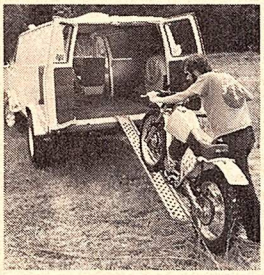

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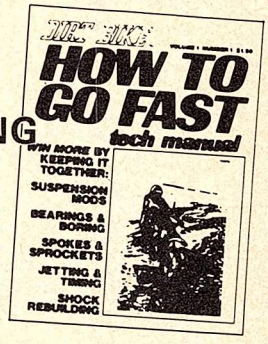

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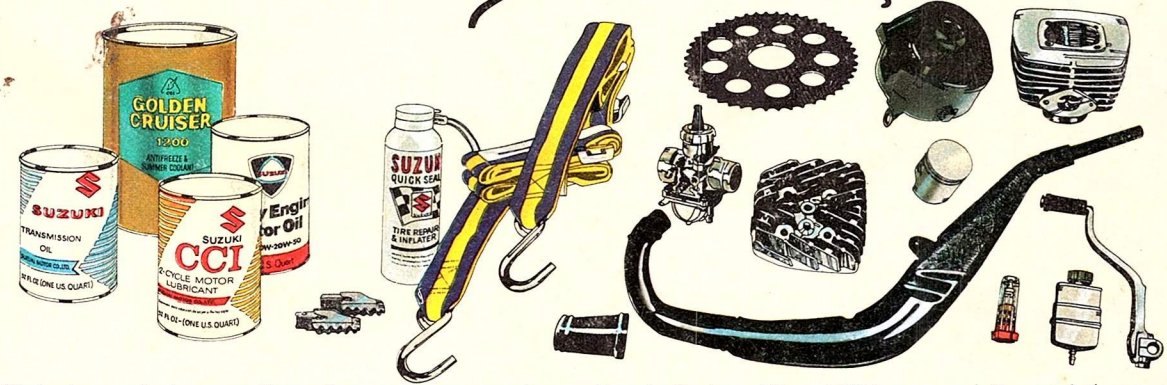

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